James Fountain Robinson

1865 -- 1929

Robinson,
James F.

TO MY CHILDREN

Letha Evelyn, John Fountain,

Bettye Lee, and Billye Ann

40641

To Richard

From

John A

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to acknowledge with grateful thanks the help of my Mother for dates and stories of her early childhood. It would have been impossible to fix certain dates of many things related herein if it had not been for my good friend, George J. Stein, whose accurately kept records provided dates and facts pertaining to the mining industry and especially the Commerce Company records.

Also, I wish to record here the helpful hand of my Florence for the time she spent in deciphering my poor handwriting and typing it into readable form. Also, Mrs. Velma Nieberding for typing the final copy, and for her help in looking up articles published in the News-Record over the years concerning my Father's activities in order to establish correct dates.

To all of the above, I am very grateful,

JOHN ALLEN ROBINSON

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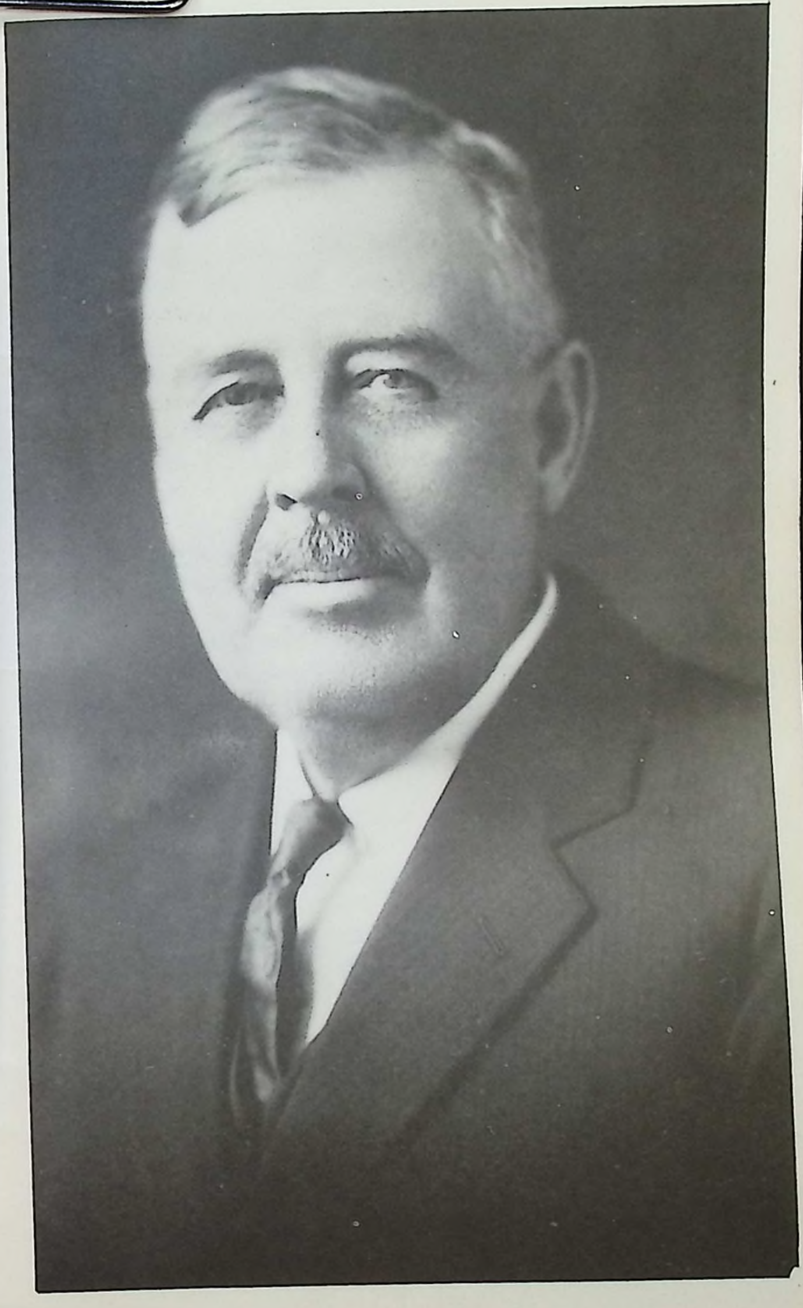

A Sketch of James F. Robinson

by John A. Robinson

My father, James Fountain Robinson, was born January 25, 1865, near Sedan, Kansas. My mother, Catherine Green Robinson, was born October 14, 1868, in Elizabethtown, Kentucky. They were married in Barton County, Missouri, near Lamar, in 1884. To them were born three children: Lillie Oletha, December 24, 1885; John Allen, March 5, 1889; and Gladys Evelyn, October 22, 1898.

My grandparents were John Wesley Robinson and Elizabeth McLaughlin Robinson. He was born in Pennsylvania and came to north Missouri in his early childhood, with his parents. There he grew into manhood and married Elizabeth McLaughlin. Soon after, they responded to the pioneer urge to "go West" and settled on a farm near Sedan, Kansas.

My father, James Fountain Robinson, was born on this farm. He was the third child, the oldest being a daughter named Anna; the others, Thomas Link and Silva DeLoss. (Silva was later nicknamed "Doc", and was known by this name to almost everyone except his parents.)

When father was about six years of age, the family moved to Eldorado Springs, Arkansas, because of my Grandmother's health. She had a very bad skin disease known as eczema. Grandfather considered the Arkansas lands near Eldorado Springs too rough for farming, and since Grandmother's health had not improved, the family moved to Barton County, Missouri, settling on a farm southeast of Lamar.

Near this location was the Forest Grove(Baptist)Church and John Wesley and Elizabeth, his wife, are buried in the cemetery nearby. My Grandfather died in 1906, at the age of 72; and my Grandmother died in 1914, at the age of 79.

It was on this farm that my father grew up. He did the chores and other farm tasks and early in life he learned how to work. He attended school at the little country schoolhouse located about a half mile west of the farm, receiving what education he could get, through the Fourth Reader. From that time on his education came from "The school of experience and hard knocks." But although his formal education ceased at an early age, he continued to study, keeping abreast of the times and informed on events. As I grew up,I well remember how much my father read at night.

He stayed on the farm until he was sixteen, when he took a job digging coal at a place called Minden Mines. When he was seventeen, he and his older brother, Tom, went to Idaho, where they worked for about a year, hauling logs and heavy timber with four to six head of mules hitched to logging wagons.

Returning to Lamar from Idaho, he again worked in and around that town. At the age of nineteen, he was married to Catherine Green, a country girl, who lived a few miles east of Grandfather's farm. The year was 1884.

MOTHER'S FAMILY

My mother, Catherine, was born near Elizabethtown, Kentucky, October 14, 1868. Her father, John W. Green, was born in Kentucky, in 1835 and

died in Elizabethtown in 1871. Her mother was also born in Kentucky in 1836, and died in Miami, Oklahoma, in 1916. The children of this marriage were: Young, Henry, Annabelle, Mollie, Sudie and Catherine.

Catherine was called, affectionatlly, "Kittie" by her brothers and sisters and the name has stayed with her until this day and is used especially by her nieces and nephews.

John W. Green(my maternal grandfather)died when my mother was three years of age. Her oldest brother, Young, died at the age of seventeen. Soon after his death, when mother was about nine years old, my grandmother Green decided to move west into Missouri. The year was 1877.

With true pioneer spirit she loaded the family belongings into covered wagons and with her five children headed West. Their destination was not certain--they had heard from travelers about the cheap land to be had in Missouri. They made the journey safely in some forty-five days, coming to a farm in Barton County, Missouri, eight miles southeast of Lamar, and three miles east of the Robinson farm.

It was a real job to clothe and feed a family of six, but the family got busy and began to farm seriously. The Robinsons and the Greens, as neighbors, took in all the country schoolhouse and neighborhood parties, so all was not hard work in those early days. There was fun mixed with the work.

As the children of the two families grew up, they "did just what comes naturally". They began to get married.

The first marriage was of Anna Robinson, my father's sister, to Henry Green, my mother's brother. Then my father, James Fountain Robinson, married the youngest Green daughter, Catherine. She was sixteen; he was nineteen.

EARLY MARRIED LIFE

After their marriage, the James Fountain Robinsons moved to a farm south of Lamar, near a little settlement called Boston. They lived there less than a year, having made a decision to quit farming. The young couple moved back to Lamar, where my father, and his brother, Tom, went into the grocery business.

It took only about two years for them to discover that they were not fitted for that line of work. During these two years they sold groceries to everybody, regardless of whether they had the money to pay. The result was that when they closed the doors they found they owed $2,000. My Grandfather,(like most fathers, when the chips are down) mortgaged his farm and loaned the grocerymen the $2,000 in order that they might pay what they owed.

Soon after this incident, my father bought a second-hand horse-power drill rig, and gave his note in payment. He began a career as a well-driller, drilling water wells for farmers in the section of the county between Lamar and Carthage, Missouri. When I was only a few months, old the family moved to Carthage, but lived there only a short time and moved back to the Forest Grove neighborhood.

INDIAN TERRITORY

Early in 1890, father heard of the need for water wells in the new country to the southwest of Baxter Springs, Kansas. He loaded up his wagon with camping equipment, tied the drill rig behind the wagon and with his younger brother, "Doc" for a helper, headed for the Indian Territory. Grandmother Green came to stay with us while father was away.

The drilling business was very good around the new settlement called Miami. Father returned in a few months, for a short visit with his family, and reported to Mother that the new country was the place for which he had been looking. He was going back and as soon as he could make enough to pay off his indebtedness to his father, he would move us to Miami.

Early in the Spring of 1892, he paid off the debt on his father's farm, loaded the family in the covered wagon and we were on our way to the Indian Territory.

At that time Miami boasted of two grocery stores, two saloons, a drug store, a general store, postoffice, a couple of livery stables, a blacksmith shop, two or three small frame churches and a two-story frame hotel.

Father and mother joined the Calvary Baptist Church soon after moving to Miami. The church had been organized in 1890 and the first church building erected on the site of the present First Baptist Church, at the corner of A and First Streets Southwest. It was a one-room frame building.

The town had been established in 1891 by The Miami Town Company with W. C. Lykins as president of the company. The lot sales were moving along at a pretty fast clip. We first lived in a small house just east of where the courthouse now stands. In a short while we moved to the northwest corner of what is now known as the Wea addition to Miami.

At that time, it was about one and one-half miles(as the crow flies!)to the nearest grocery store where Sister Lillie and I walked to trade eggs for coffee and sugar while father was away drilling wells.

We lived there for about a year, when George Nicely, who operated a saw mill two miles west of us near Horseshoe Lake, was employed to move our house to the southeast part of the Wea tract. It was on the land where the Farrier Thriftway market is now located.

Mr. Nicely did the moving with eight head of oxen and left the furniture and everything inside during the move. It was a great day for me! I rode in the house as the move was made.

We lived in that house about three years. As it was located on the main road out of Miami, north, there were many times at night when some of the "wild and wooly" boys would leave the saloons, all liquored up,and with six-shooters blazing away, would ride by our house, whooping it up in general.

My father was away drilling a great deal of the time and my mother, with true pioneer spirit, stayed alone with only my sister and myself for company. If she was ever afraid we never knew it. She had a Winchester rifle and knew how to use it. When things outside got too rough, she would turn out the coal-oil lamp and stand by and wait for things to quiet down. I have always felt that had the necessity arisen, she would not have hesitated to use the rifle.

Father continued his water well drilling for some three years after moving the family to Miami. Most of his work was in the northern part of what is now Ottawa County. During this period of time he became acquainted with two brothers, George and Al Coleman. They were engaged in the drilling business south of Miami, around Fairland and Vinita.

One well I remember quite clearly was the one drilled at the intersection of what is now South Main Street and First Avenue in Miami. It was a public watering place for livestock, especially for horses, since the horse was the general mode of transportation at that time. Occasionally a team of oxen would come through town pulling a wagon.

I believe this well was paid for by public subscription by the up-and-coming town boosters, but mainly by the Miami Townsite Company. The day father collected the money for the well, a notorious bad man by the name of Bill West was in town. He must have heard of the cash transaction, for he inquired of a friend of my father's, "where that fellow, Robinson, lived."

As the story was told to me, this friend hunted my father up and said, "Jim, you had better watch out tonight; Bill West is trying to find out where you live."

People in those days were rather careful of money. There were no banks closer than Baxter Springs, Kansas, or Seneca, Missouri. That night my mother with sister and myself, were sent to spend the night with the Gibson family living about half a mile from our house. Dad and his drill helper at that time, a man by the name of Porty Judd, kept watch at the house with loaded Winchesters, but Bill West did not come out.

A short while later, West was back in town and caused some trouble at one of the saloons, and was arrested by the town marshall for disturbing the peace. A. L. Keeney, the town marshall, had been commissioned by the Mayor and other indignant citizens to arrest West. He did arrest him on two different occasions and each time the outlaw escaped.

Bill West vowed to come back some day and kill Keeney, who ran a blacksmith shop on South Main Street.

I was attending subscription school in the little, frame Methodist Church building located acros the street from the southwest corner of what is no the courthouse square. I can't recall whether it was during the noon hour or the recess-time, but it was while the children were outside playing tha a shot was heard and we saw men running toward Mr. Keeney's blacksmith shop. Oscar Keeney, the marshall's son, who was about my age, and I, ran over to see what was going on.

Bill West had made good his promise. When we reached the shop, Mr. Keeney was stretched out on the floor of the shop with a bullet hole in the middle of his forehead.

I recall that school was dismissed and by the time I reached home, my father was saddling his horse and had his Winchester tied to the saddle He was joining a posse that would try to track down and catch Bill West.

After several days of searching the hill country south and east of Miami, the posse returned without finding their man, although he was supposed to be staying in that section of the country. Bill West was reported killed sometime later, down around Tahlequah.

WE GO BACK TO VISIT IN MISSOURI

Father sold his drill rig soon after drilling the well on South Main Street. The family had not been back to Missouri since moving to the Indian Territory, so the decision was made to take a trip and visit the relatives up around Lamar. I was six years old and remember the trip quite well.

We made the journey in a covered wagon and what an occasion it was, getting to go back and visit with aunts, uncles and cousins! There is no doubt they were anxious to question us about our new home in the "wild" Indian Territory, but I was too young to remember.

We camped the first night, just outside Galena, Kansas, having passed throughtthe town at sundown. I remember seeing the first street lights I had ever seen. They were coal-oil burning lamps. Galena was the largest town I had ever been in and it looked like a wonderful place to me. The thing I remember about our camping place was that father, while breaking up wood to build the campfire, was hit in the eye by a stick of wood and that he was badly hurt.

The next day we arrived at an Uncle's place between Carthage and Lamar. After making the rounds, visiting with my grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins, we returned home. We were gone on this trip something like two weeks. I remember most vividly a box rabbit-trap given to me by an older cousin. On the way home I would set the trap each night, but caught no rabbits!

BACK TO MIAMI

When we were settled in our home once more, father went to work for a Mr. Charles M. Harvey, who was running a grocery store on the west side of Main Street, in what is now the hundred block on South Main. The McKinney Saloon was next door to the north, and the Mathews Drug Store was just to the south. The Keeney Blacksmith Shop was at the south end of the same block.

Mr. Harvey was the envy of many Miami citizens at that time because he owned a double-barrel shotgun and a bird dog. He would leave the store, go east to Tar Creek, hunt up the creek for a mile or two, cross over and hunt back to the east side to where he had started. By that time he would have all the quail he could carry in his hunting coat. He would come back to the store and as Dad told the story, "it looked like he had a bushel of birds!"

Father told us many times that while he was drilling on his first trip to Indian Territory, he practically lived on prairie chickens. He kept his single-barrel shotgun with him at all times. Game was plentiful then, so the early settlers had some sport along with the hardships they endured.

Father worked for Mr. Harvey about six months. He then took a contract to drill for oil near where the 'Frisco railroad bridge now crosses Tar Creek northeast of Miami. W. C. Lykins was the promoter of this venture, and stock was sold to promote same. No record can be found as to the depth of the drilled well, although the project continued for several months. It is needless to say that no oil was found.

Father had built what was called a Standard Rig Derrick. This style of rig became a familiar sight a few years later around the new boom town of Tulsa. The reason Mr. Lykins and others believed there might be oil in this area, was the fact that tar-oily substance was found floating on the top of the water in the creek, and this is how the name "Tar Creek" came to be applied to this particular stream.

FIRST MINING

When the Tar Creek project was completed, father became interested in a mining lease(south of Joplin, near Bellville)with three partners: Bob Hill and Bob Pearson of Bellville, and Jap Clements of Miami. The four of them worked together and sank a shaft and Dad got his first experience in mining lead and zinc. The experience, however, did not last long. After sinking the shaft and starting a couple of prospect drifts, the ore evidently looked pretty good. They sold out for $11,000, which to the four partners was a lot of money at that time.

During the time this work was going on, the trips to Miami on week-ends were made by horse and buggy. Father thought he had one of the best horses in the Territory. He told the story many times in later years, about the big sorrel horse, named "Frank" that he used for traveling around the country. He would leave Bellville in what he called a long trot, and old Frank would never slow up until he stuck his nose over the gate at home. In those days there was a direct route from Baxter Springs to Miami, with no wire fences to hinder progress.

ANOTHER PARTNERSHIP

About this time Mr. Harvey had sold his grocery store, and he and father formed a partnership and went into the real estate and insurance business. They were both pretty fair traders and began buying and selling real estate. If they saw what they thought was a bargain they would buy it. Their combined capital was not sufficient at times to handle some of the deals that came along, during that time. The Bank of Miami was by then open for business.

The partners could get small loans at the bank, but the rate of interest paid was as high as two per cent a month at times. They admitted this was mighty high, but it was the only place they could borrow money.

This reminds me of a story Dad told on his friend, Tom Lewis, who later was town marshall of Miami. Tom told Dad he was going over to a certain place to play poker.

"Tom, don't you know that game is crooked?" Dad asked.

"Yes, Jim, I know" Tom answered, "but its the only game in town!"

The firm of Robinson and Harvey opened their office about the middle of what is now the first block south of Central Avenue on the east side of the street. The downstairs was occupied by a watch repair and jewelry man named Tom Allen, who was also the town champion checker player. Robinson and Harvey occupied the upstairs room. The stairway ran up outside of the building.

In 1895, Father built a new house on the north end of what is now "C" Street Northwest, and at that time it was on the edge of the original townsite of Miami. Some time around 1900, Robinson and Harvey began leasing farm land but more especially prairie grass land north of Miami. The hay was baled and shipped mainly to Kansas City.

INDIAN FRIENDSHIP

During this period of time the firm of Robinson and Harvey formed friendships with a great number of the Quapaw Indians with whom they had dealings. These friendships placed them in good stead for the future dealings and developments which were soon to come with many of the Quapaws. Some of these were John Beaver, Mah-Hun-Kah-She-Kah Beaver, Anna Beaver, Alex Beaver, Benjamin Quapaw, See-Sah Quapaw, Solomon Quapaw, Julia Quapaw, Anna Quapaw McKibben, John Mohawk, Wesa Greenback, Little Greenback, Pius Quapaw, Ne-Wah-Kis Quapaw Hampton, Laura Jenny Zeka Wilson, the Goodeagles, the Red Eagles, Wat-Tah-Noh-Zhe and many others.

Mr. Harvey and father drove a horse and buggy all over the Quapaw country, contacting these people, obtaining new and renewing old leases. A great number of these families lived in the neighborhood of what is familiarly known as "The Devil's Promenade" on Spring River.

Many indians had allotments scattered from that area west almost to the Neosho river. Father and Mr. Harvey would spend days on these trips, and usually took food along as Mr. Harvey prided himself on being a good cook. Other times they would break bread with their indian friends.

AND POLITICS!

Father, at all times, took a great deal of interest in politics and local city government, dating back to the first mayoralty election, when the town was incorporated. He voted the Democratic ticket, everything being equal, but if he thought the best man for the office was a Republican he would vote for him. He never hesitated to let everyone know just where he stood on any public issues that came up for discussion or where it was necessary to bring the issue to a vote of the people.

As is usually the case in a small community, there naturally develops rivalry between men who have different viewpoints. This is especially true in politics. The first instance which I can recall personally, was during the presidential campaign of 1896 when Bryan and McKinley ran for president.

Father and two or three other men went to the Democratic convention in Kansas City where Bryan was nominated. They were not delegates but managed someway to get in when Bryan delivered his "Crown of Thorns" speech. From that time on, Dad was a Bryan man. In the campaign of 1896, he was for Bryan and Dr. W. L. McWilliams, one of the town's leading doctors, was for McKinley. Both men were very active for their respective candidates.

Eventually a bet was made that if Bryan was elected the Doctor was to wheel my father down Main Street of Miami in a wheelbarrow. If McKinley was elected, Dad was to do the wheeling. Lots of publicity had been given to the affair, and a big crowd was on hand for the occasion. I, too, was on hand for the excitement. However, I was very sorry to see my Dad doing the wheeling!

As the ordeal was finished and the Doctor got out of the wheelbarrow, Dad stood up in the wheelbarrow and made what I believe was his first public speech. He started with "In victory or defeat, I am still a Democrat!" He shouted this as loud as he could speak and with plenty of determination in his voice. He had the crowd with him for there were more Democrats in town than Republicans. From that time on the rivalry existed between those two men and as long as they lived.

Another campaign in which Dad was vitally interested was the campaign to make Miami the county seat. In this campaign, father and the doctor were on the same side. But when the contest was on to elect a delegate to the State Constitutional Convention, the Republicans nominated Dr. McWilliams and the Democrats nominated Mr. Don P. Wills. Wills was a friend of my father's when they both lived in Lamar, and he had moved to Miami in the late nineties. Father and another friend of his, Mr. Jesse Byard, a hard-hitting Democrat, rode all over the county campaigning for Mr. Wills. Mr. Wills was elected.

A good many years later the doctor ran for mayor of Miami. He didn't make it. Whatever the endeavor, father always carried it through with determination. Even though these two men were political enemies at times during their life-time, they had business dealings with each other and as some would say it looked at times like they had "buried the hatchet."

Father was on the school board in 1900 when the first public school was built, where the present high school now stands. It was an eight-room, two-story frame building. Some time later two more rooms were added to the east side of the building.

SCHOOL DAYS

I finished my schooling in Miami in 1905. At that time only two years of high school were available. Before the schoolhouse was built, schools were held in private homes, church buildings and later the upper classes were held in the upstairs rooms of Dr. McWilliams' building, located at Central and Main.

My first year to attend school was in Mrs. Jenny Talbot's home. This was what was known as a "public subscription school". Each student paid so much per month. I was not quite six years of age; Mrs. Talbot had a son about four years old. She was the best teacher I ever had--she let me play outside with her little boy, Claude, most of the day. So I had a good time my first term of school.

I don't know, but I imagine she did not charge Dad the regular tuition of one dollar a month that year!

THE BEGINNING OF MINING

Sometime during 1905, a water well was being drilled on the Gordon land a few miles north of Miami. At a depth of about 90 feet, some pyrites of iron, sometimes called Mundic and sometimes Fool's Gold was found in the shale cuttings. The Coleman Brothers' drill rig was doing the work and a Mr. Bill Waddel was working on the rig. This information was relayed to my father and C. M. Harvey by the Colemans, George and Al. The discussion which followed was whether the iron ore found in the shale cuttings had any indication of zinc and lead in the formations nearby.

The men were certain from their knowledge of the mines around Galena, Kansas, and Belleville, Missouri, where they had been, that there was iron ore such as this in the cuttings found in the zinc and lead being mined in these camps. Whether they made the decision at the first meeting of these four men, or later, I do not know. I am relating that which was told to me a few years later.

The important thing was that they did decide to get mining leases on as much of the land in that immediate vicinity as possible; no drilling was to be done until the leases were obtained. Robinson and Harvey were to get the leases; the Coleman brothers to do the drilling.

The partners were: J. F. Robinson, C. M. Harvey, George L. Coleman and A. E. Coleman. No announcement however, was made at the time of the partnership.

All the land in the neighborhood of the well was soon under lease with the exception of 200 acres, the Sarah (Emma) Gordon allotment. She was not of age and could not make a valid lease until in August, 1907, when she became of age.

The partners agreed to start the drilling without this lease. No ore had been found west of Lincolnville, which was several miles to the east, and they decided that if they did find anything they could get the lease later when the young lady would be of age--in about a year and a half. Late in 1905 or early in 1906, they began to drill. This caused no excitement. So far as the public was concerned, just another water well was being drilled.

The Robinson and Harvey office was moved to the second floor of the building at Central and Main Street--the north side of Central Avenue, now occupied by the Crown Drug Store. Having but a single room, the office at times would be rather crowded. The next few months the Coleman brothers were seen around the office and at times all four men seemed to be very interested with something they were looking at in a tin wash pan.

Immediately across the hall in this same building, two young lawyers opened up an office and the sign, Thompson and Thompson hung over the door: A. Scott Thompson and Vern E. Thompson (no relation). Both of these young attorneys were identified with the mining industry from its beginning north of Miami in 1907.

The drilling went fast and it was not long until people began asking questions as to why the Colemans were drilling so many water wells in such a small area north of Miami. In the latter part of 1906, the information leaked out that zinc and lead had been discovered north of Miami. I believe this was at the time the partnership was disclosed to the public.

During this time I was working for Dr. Wormington, who owned the drug store on the first floor below where the office was located. I missed school that winter for the reason that Dad could not spare the money for me to go away. He was hard-pressed for money along with the rest of his partners who were in the same circumstances. They were trying to get enough cash together to start sinking shafts and to keep the drilling going ahead. By this time they were certain they had found some rich deposits of ore.

The mining fraternity around Joplin took a rather dim view of the discovery. They expressed the opinion they were pretty certain that not much ore of any consequence would be found on that flat, prairie land north of Miami. The partners were unable to borrow money from the banks. Hadn't the mining-men said they didn't think there was much to the stories being told about the rich ore bodies?

Early in 1907, the four partners, unable to go any further with their development, and to keep the drill working, made the decision to sub-lease some of the land where the ore had been found. I believe that this was when the partnership took the name, "The Miami Royalty Company".

Sub-leases were made to the Old Chief Mining Company, the Queen City Mining Company, the New State Mining Company, the King Jack, the Frost Morning, and others. Most of these sub-leases were on ten-acre tracts at an advanced royalty over what the first leases called for.

Activities began picking up soon. With the organization of the Miami Royalty Company, the mining industry of Ottawa County became a reality. A shaft was begun that summer on the Old Chief lease; also on the New State.

August, 1907, was an important, a crucial date, as was mentioned earlier about a certain 200-acre lease. According to record, this lease was given to George W. Bingham, who at that time was vice-president of the Bank of Miami. The lease was assigned to Amos Hatton of Webb City, Missouri.

It is understandable that the four partners were not very happy over this development. Let us just pass this phase of the story over by saying, "maybe they were out-maneuvered". There seemed to be quite a coolness developing however, about that time, between the Bank of Miami and the four partners.

The first production of ore from the Miami Royalty Company leases came from the New State Mining Company, in 1907. Next from the Old Chief Mining Company early in 1908, followed by the Queen City Mining Company, also in 1908.

The office work began to pile up on the company about this time, and Ralph Tuthill, who was employed by the Bank of Miami, came with the company to do their office work.

A very difficult time occurred during this period for the little new mining camp. The road from Miami north being nothing but a common dirt county road, became impassable at times. During the Fall and Winter months when there was much rain, the roads would be cut to pieces by the hauling of heavy loads of lumber and machinery. At times wagons would bog down and sometimes a man on horseback could hardly make it.

The first road work done on this piece of road after the shafts were sunk, was to haul boulders and fill up the worst mud holes. However, there were times when no ore wagons could get through.

Late in 1908, Franklin M. Smith of Joplin, promoted the building of the short line railroad fro Miami to the mining field. It was called the Okl homa, Kansas & Missouri Interurban Railway Compan Mr. Smith was its first president. When this sho line was completed, it solved the moving of ore and machinery to a certain extent.

By the latter part of 1908, the Miami Royalty Company was in a position, financially, to start mining operations in a small way. They incorporated a company and named it "The Turkey Fat Mining Company". They issued all the stock equally to the four partners. The Turkey Fat Lease covered ten acres in the southeast corner of the Wat-Tah-Noh-Zhe land. The balance of this allotment of 40 acres, had been subleased to others.

We will have to leave it to conjecture whether these men were lucky or whether this ten acre lease was held by them for their initial venture in the mining district. The Turkey Fat mine made its first shipment of ore late in 1908.

This little mine proved to be one of the richest ore deposits the company ever mined. It really set them up in business. Mainly from the proceeds of this small mill on this ten-acre lease, three more concentrating plants were built in what was later known as the Commerce section of the Tri-State district; it paid for hundreds of drill holes scattered from Commerce to and beyond the Kansas line.

As soon as shaft sinking began in this area, and a demand for miners began coming along, a townsite was platted on a plat of ground to the south of where the shafts were started and a number of small homes erected. I do not recall who platted this land named "North Miami". In 1907 or 1908, when Amos Hatton of Webb City, started the development of the Gordon land, the miners had begun settling around the Wat-Tah-Noh-Zhe and Gordon land and a few were living on the east side of the road. This settlement was called "Hattonville". No plats were made or any lots sold. People just settled down on the mining lands close to where the work was going on.

AWAY TO SCHOOL

I continued to work for Dr. Wormington in the drug store until the fall of 1907. By that time, things evidently were looking better for father told me to get ready to go to school. It did not take me long to choose my school. Ray McNaughton and Walter Beck, two of my friends, were attending Drury College in Springfield, Missouri. My folks decided that this college was okay with them. Drury offered a four-year course in high school as well as four years of college work. I completed the two years I was "short" in high school and the Freshman year in college. I started on my Sophomore year when I decided I had all the education I needed.

I came home and told father I did not want to go to school any more; that I wanted to quit and go to work. He was thoroughly disgusted with me and told me so. "Some day," he said, "You will regret that you did not go on to school when you had the opportunity."

At that time I could not see it as he did. Finally, he consented for me to stay at home and go to work. I have often wondered if he thought I'd gotten into a "jam" as the reason for my action. However, that was not the case. I never told him that after staying out of school a year after I had finished the two years of high school in Miami that I never seemed to care much for the classroom after that.

But I had a great deal of fun while in Drury. I made the baseball team the second year I was t there, and was elected Captain of the team during my Freshman year in college.

That was my first experience in traveling around and seeing the country. I had never been more than a hundred miles from home when we made a trip south and played the universities of Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama and Mississippi A and M. Although we were a small college, we did all right on this trip and I began to find out that this was quite a country.

My schooling came to a close in 1910. In later years I realized how much smarter my father was than I.

TO WORK

I went to work in the clothing store my father traded for while I was away at school during my second year. He employed Jim Robards to run the business for him. Jim was a former employee of the firm of Robards and Early who had opened a store in Miami in the late nineties.

At the time I started working in the store it had been moved to the new building about the center of the block on the west side of Main Street between Central and First Street north.

Robinson & Wills was the new name of the firm. My brother-in-law, Roy Wills, and I would be the owners some day, if and when? In the late spring of the following year a young lady came to Miami to teach music, both piano and voice. She and another young woman by the name of Beulah Parker had come down to Oklahoma from Bolivar, Missouri.

Miss Parker set up her studio in her Grandfather's home in Vinita.

AND ROMANCE

The other young lady, Letha Lee, went to Chelsea just a few miles south of Vinita. It happened that a Baptist missionary by the name of Jim Wiley, who lived in Muskogee, was holding a meeting in Chelsea and Miss Lee volunteered to lead the singing.

When Brother Jim, as he was known all over northeast Oklahoma, closed the meeting, he asked Miss Lee what she was doing there. She said she was looking for a location to teach music. He advised her to come to Miami, for, in his opinion, Miami was going to make a good town.

He gave her the name of a lady who could help her get located and besides the lady was a good Baptist! The name of the lady? Mrs. James F. Robinson!

Father was glad to help out when the music teacher began to sign up pupils. He told me if I would take lessons he would pay the bills. As soon as I went to see about taking lessons I decided to start right away!

I did not seem to make any progress with the music and the teacher insisted I would not concentrate on it. I finally decided that music was not my career, so I just married the teacher on August 23, 1911. She was a wonderful Christian, a fine singer, church worker and wife, but one of her greatest accomplishments was mother to our four children: Letha Evelyn, born May 4, 1914; John Fountain, born January 18, 1917;

Bettye Lee, born November 20, 1918, and Billye Ann, born August 6, 1920.

MINING PROBLEMS

By 1910, the mining business was going along very well. The Miami Royalty Company began to prosper. The company began to acquire more leases to the north and east. And as they began to make money, troubles also came along.

Late in 1910, C. M. Harvey moved from Miami to El Paso, Texas, on account of Mrs. Harvey's health. He was back in Miami several times every year until 1940.

The government had sent a special investigator to investigate the leasing of Indian lands. His name was Paul Ewart. After staying in the district for a year or so the Department gave the company a clean record as to their dealings with the Red Man. It might be interesting to mention here that for years afterward whenever this investigator's name came up for discussion, Dad's blood pressure went up immediately. All who knew father also knew that when the occasion demanded he never avoided a scrap. As the saying goes, "he came out swinging".

During this period of the hassle with the government inspector, a lawsuit was filed by a man named Maxwell. He was not contesting the interest of Robinson & Harvey but was claiming an equal interest with the Coleman brothers of their half-interest. He claimed that all four men were conspiring to beat him out of his interest. This made my father fight just as hard as if he had a financial interest at stake.

A. Scott Thompson, a local lawyer, Hi Curry, of Webb City, Missouri, Ed Sapp, of Galena, Kansas, and Henry Asp, of Oklahoma City, defended the case. The trial lasted for several weeks and eventually went to the Supreme Court of Oklahoma which held that Mr. Maxwell had no interest with the Coleman Brothers.(Maxwell vs. Coleman, et al, 64 Okla. 99; 166 P.210)

In 1912, Victor Rakowsky, a mining engineer of Duluth, Minnesota, came to Miami and was employed to do some work for the company.

His first contact with the company was in 1909 at which time he was representing some mining interests at Duluth. He had been sent here to talk with my father and his partners in regard to buying an interest and furnishing capital for further development of the leases. Nothing was accomplished, however, at this meeting.

Soon after Mr. Rakowsky's employment, he with George J. Stein, then Ottawa County Surveyor, began to make maps and extensive surveys both on the surface and underground in the mines and leases on the company holdings.

Late in 1912, throughtthe energetic efforts of "Vic"(as Mr. Rakowsky was soon generally known)an option was given to the American Zinc, Lead and Smelting Company on all the holdings of the Miami Royalty Company.

The American Zinc Company, with offices located in St. Louis, did some drilling on the leases but evidently it did not turn out satisfactorily to them. They let the option expire. The option, as I remember it, was for $1,250,000.

In 1913, the company employed the same group of lawyers--Thompson, Curry and Asp, who defended the Maxwell suit for them, to make a study and recommend a plan other than a corporation, for transacting business.

It appeared that under the state laws, it was illegal for a corporation to hold fee lands in Oklahoma, unless the lands were being used specifically for mining. The Company had been buying considerable acreage of farm lands scattered over the northern part of the county.

The lawyers presented a recommendation to organize a business trust, following a plan being used extensively in the East, called "The Massachusetts Trust Plan". The Plan seemed to have all the advantages of a corporation and would, in the opinion of the lawyers, not be subject to the penalties placed on corporations for owning fee lands.

Instead of electing a board of directors to operate the business as a corporation, the business trust elected trustees to supervise its affairs. The plan was agreed to and all assets of the Miami Royalty Company were transferred to the newly-organized company named "The Commerce Mining and Royalty Company", a business trust.

Stock was issued equally to the four men who formed the partnership in 1906. The stockholders met and elected James F. Robinson, Charles M. Harvey and George L. Coleman as trustees. The trustees then elected James F. Robinson, president; Charles M. Harvey, vice-president; George L. Coleman, secretary-treasurer.

AN ENJOYABLE VACATION

In the early part of 1913, Father traded the clothing store for some leases northeast of what was still called Hattonville. This proved later by developments to be one of his better trades up to that time.

Not long after this, father bought a seven-passenger Winton automobile(compressed air self-starter). He with Mother, my two sisters, my wife and my sister's two children, Catherine and Dick, all riding in the Winton, and my brother-in-law, Roy Wills, and myself in a Model T Ford, loaded with camping equipment, started to Colorado.

Fighting mud roads, fixing flats, changing spark plugs and with the radiator boiling dry occasionally, we arrived in Rocky Ford, Colorado six days after leaving Miami. There we stopped and visited with Mr. and Mrs. Al Coleman for two or three days. They seemed to be happy to see us and treated us royally, even though nine people had barged in without notice!

Mr. Coleman had moved to Colorado in 1909, because of his health. He was bothered with asthma.

From there, we drove into the mountains west of Salida, Colorado. We pitched camp on Little River and stayed there for two weeks; had a wonderful time catching mountain trout and cooking them over a camp fire. This was one of the most enjoyable trips we ever had and one long to be remembered by all the family.

When we returned from this trip I started to work for the Company -- The Commerce Mining and Royalty Company. The business had been expanding and the office was moved to a building which had been built by T. L. Robinson on the corner of First and Main Northwest. It was rented to the county for offices. There was a room on the second floor for the courtroom.

The Company rented a large room on the north side of the building at the time it was constructed, around 1910 or 1911, as I recall.

assays of ore samples of the ore shipments. It may have been sooner, but it was during this year when I first began to bring in the samples from the drill cuttings to have them assayed.

Back in 1906, during the time when the first drilling was done, no assays were made. When the drill record was made, if it showed zinc and lead shines or fair lead and zinc, and if it was recorded on the drill record as rich lead and zinc, that was good enough.

AND THE ROADS!

At this time and for the next few years, there was nothing but dirt roads beyond Commerce. During winter and in the spring of the year, we had trouble moving rigs and trying to get from one lease to another. I had a Model T Ford and could get as far as Commerce but once there I would, on many occasions, get a horse at the livery stable and make the drill rigs on horseback.

Once in a while I would get too optimistic and make the mistake of trying to reach the rigs with the Model T. Sometimes I would get stuck, even with chains and have to leave the car until a team of horses could be found to pull it out. I remember a couple of times I had to walk to Commerce late in the evening and leave the Ford out on the prairie until morning.

Late in 1913 there was enough evidence from the few holes drilled there to form the opinion that some ore deposits might be found on Section #30 on the Benjamin and See-Sah Quapaw allotments. The company began more extensive drilling and had four or five drill rigs working that were scattered over a wide area of leases.

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1914 opened with prospects looking better on Section 30. The drilling continued and during the next few months a few good holes were drilled, but it was hard to define the trend of the ore. We had a great number of what were called "Shine holes". The Company decided to go ahead and sink a shaft and take a look to see what it was like. The shaft work started late in the Fall of 1914.

During this year, Mr. O. M. Youse, a drilling contractor of Baxter Springs, Kansas, had leased some eight or nine hundred acres west of Baxter Springs on what was called "Blue Mound" and to the west and north of the mound. He had leased this acreage in 1912 and was drilling on the Scott-Jarrett land, and had found a few shines. He discussed this matter with the company, and sold them a half interest in the leases. It was agreed for him to continue to do the drilling.

WORLD WAR I

In the month of July, 1914, the Arch-duke of Austria was "bumped off" and this touched the spark that soon had most of Europe in the flames of war. The Kaiser had the war machinery all greased up, and it did not take him long to get it rolling. When this started no one over here realized how soon it was to affect the expansive development of the mining district in Ottawa County.

The shaft in Section 30 was completed and it was not long before some pull drifts were driven out from the shaft and the company discovered they had opened up what looked like another rich ore deposit. A mill was started immediately, and the mine was named the "Blue Goose". The old two-piece rig used to do the drilling on this lease was painted blue and was known as the Blue Goose drill rig. This home-made drill rig with a traction steam engine for power, was operated by an old well driller who ran this outfit until he was eighty years of age. He and the old rig became one of the familiar sights during this period of expansion in the Tri-State district. His name was Elam Hodson. (This was the rig that Roy Wills and I bought in 1912, and it had several good mines to its credit.)

The Blue Goose Mine made its initial production in 1915. It has been mentioned that Ralph J. Tuthill was the first employee of the company. He carried a one-fifth interest in the Blue Goose mine with the Company. His faith in the new mining company back in 1908 had begun to pay dividends.

PICHER IS BORN

During this year the Picher Lead Company which had been drilling north and east of Commerce about six miles, started sinking a shaft, and a settlement soon started in that area. It was called Picher.

Activities in the mining field accelerated rapidly. The Company had ten or twelve rigs drilling on several different leases. During the early part of this year I was spending all of my time out in the field and was in charge of all the development work for the Company. Looking back over my experience in the Tri-State field, this was the most interesting part of my life's work in the mining field.

Every time a new discovery was made the thrill continued from day to day, watching with intensive interest to see if the new discovery would develop into an ore deposit which would be rich enough to mine.

The Cactus Mill located on the Cardin land did not prove to be a very prosperous operation. The mill was moved to the southwest forty acres of the Wat-Tah-Noh-Zhe land, and was put into the production list again.

The first fatal accident the Company had was at the Turkey Fat Mine. The handling of the case by the Insurance Company with which the liability was carried, was very unsatisfactory. There was no attempt to settle the claim, and the Turkey Fat mining company was sued. The case was kept in court for several years.

The incident so aggravated my father that when the Oklahoma Legislature passed a compensation law in 1915, the Company asked for and was granted permission to carry its own risk. Thereafter, all classes of insurance were canceled.

The Company set aside in a separate fund, an amount each month equal to the prevailing rate charged by insurance companies. It was never sued after the first case mentioned above. Every fatal accident thereafter was immediately settled by the Company, except where minors were involved. In such a case, it was necessary to appear in court and have the settlement approved by the Court. This was called a "friendly suit".

Under the compensation laws, hearings on accident claims were held before the Commission and awards made. As long as the company was in business, this proved to be a very satisfactory way to handle the accidents that occurred in this hazardous industry.

Meanwhile, the drilling was progressing on the John Beaver land and some good drill holes were being brought in. Several holes had been put down on the Wilbur land just over the line in Kansas. This was proving to be the most difficult piece of ground to drill we had yet encountered. Now and then we would get a few cuttings that showed some ore. Then we would hit open ground and lose all the cuttings for the next fifteen or twenty feet. The flow of water was so strong it washed all the cuttings away. Drilling was going along on the other Kansas leases with O. M. Youse, but without much success.

About this time, Mr. Siebenthal of the U.S. Geological Survey was working in the district. He and father became good friends. Mr. Siebenthal thought the Kansas area had a good chance to produce ore and his advice was to keep drilling up around the Blue Mound area. Drilling was also being done east of the Blue Goose Mine, and to the northeast on Section 30.

In 1916, after the Blue Goose Mine was producing lead and zinc in large quantities, two men from Kansas by the name of Apple and Harris showed up with a lease covering most of Section 30 where the mines were located. They claimed that the Company's lease was invalid.

In some mining areas of the country this was called "lease jumping". After overtures were made individually, for some kind of settlement, a telephone call came from a lawyer in Galena to my father. He asked him to come to Galena; that he had a matter of vital importance to the company to discuss with him; that he was ill and not able to come to Miami.

Father and I drove to Galena to see the lawyer He was in bed and did not get up. After light talk for awhile, he raised up on his elbow and said, "Jim, you're skating on damn thin ice down there in Oklahoma on those Indian leases. Why don't you try to make some kind of a deal with Apple and Harris and settle the matter?"

Father answered without a moment's hesitation,

"That's just the way I like it. That thin ice will keep some of those ________ off, because they will be afraid to get on the ice with me. You tell them to crack down any time they are ready. I'll be in the courtroom waiting for them." We excused ourselves and left.

On the way home that night, Dad said to me, "There are times you have to stand up and fight, and this is one of those times. If we pay off on this we will be paying off from here on out."

A suit was filed late in 1916, in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Oklahoma: Apple-Harris vs Robinson, et al. Scott Thompson defended the case. The company employed the same lawyers to help in this case they had used on two previous occasions, already related. They prepared this case very thoroughly for there was a lot at stake besides just the one lease involved.

The case was tried in Muskogee. The Company won the lawsuit and the decision went far toward settling the titles on Indian leases in this district.

1916 opened up with the most extensive development the Company had ever carried on up to that time--drilling all over the place! A good mine had been drilled out on the John Beaver lease and a mill was under construction. This mine was called "The Beaver". It was plain to be seen by this time that the greater mining activities would be carried on in that section of the district.

The decision was made to move the supply house from the Turkey Fat Mine. A much larger supply of mining equipment was to be carried. A larger warehouse was constructed on the John Beaver land. Henry Duffey, who had been with the company at the Turkey Fat office, was in charge of the supply business. The Company sold supplies to anyone; it was also an advantage to the company to purchase their own supplies wholesale. A deep well was drilled at this location for a fresh water supply for the mine. This water was also piped to the Blue Goose Mine.

That same year a mill site was being drilled out on the 40 acres east of the Blue Goose. The 40 acres farther to the east was showing up very good. It was now thought that a mill on 40 acres or more was all that was necessary. This idea was quite different from the earlier days when the first mills were being built in the Commerce section. The two mills, Blue Goose and Beaver, were classed as large mills at this time.

To the north of the John Beaver lease, the development work on the Anna Beaver allotment was looking good, and the prospect of another mine up there was promising. But the work on the Wilbur land in Kansas was still progressing very slowly, not enough ore to justify the sinking of a shaft. It definitely was the most difficult ground to drill that the company had encountered. About this time the story was told, and it was not very far from right: that it cost more to get one particular hole to the depth of 300 feet than the drill rig was worth. Therefore, the company lost a drill rig in the hole!

In 1916, O. M. Youse died. He was the Commerce Company's partner in the 800 acres of leases covering the Scott-Jarrett, Davis, Webber, Foley and Barr lands. Later in the year the company made a deal with the Youse family represented by C. E. Youse, the oldest son, to take over the mining rights on this block of leases. Then the company took an option on the Webber fee land. Some ore had been discovered on this acreage and the company decided to sink a shaft and take a look.

Drill records were not too good, but it was the best way to find out if the ore deposit was worth mining. The company had discovered by experience that sometimes the ore mined out better than the drilling indicated.

The shaft was completed, the prospect drifts were driven, but the ore found did not justify building a mill. The Company let the option on the land expire. The drill was moved about a fourth of a mile east of the shaft. This was a five per cent royalty lease from the land owner, and was good as long as ore was produced. This was classed as a very favorable lease and the company decided to be sure there was no ore to be found elsewhere on the land before turning the lease back to the land owner.

The Company made a contract for a sub-lease on sixty acres of the Barr land to S. H. Davis for the Vinegar Hill Zinc Company. This joined the Webber land on the east where the company was drilling.

INFLATION

Due to the European war, both lead and zinc prices went up materially because the German army had destroyed the great zinc smelters in Belgium. The demand for metal from the United States was greater than the capacity to produce. The average price of zinc concentrate in the district in 1914, was $37 per ton, and lead concentrates $48 per ton. In 1916, the average price of zinc was $85 and lead $90 per ton.

The district was expanding rapidly. The outside world no longer doubted that the northern part of Ottawa County, Oklahoma, had great promise in developing into a real mining country.

The high price of ore brought into the district many promoters looking for leases.

The small two-storied (Savoy) hotel located a block east of Main Street on Central in Miami, was swamped with customers looking for mining leases. If a lease was located in the northern part of the county, it was soon taken up. A drill rig was moved on; a company incorporated; and the promoter went back home and began to sell stock in the "Happy Jack" mining company or some other name.

For years many inquirers came to our office, or to the bank, asking what the stock in the "Jack Rabbit Mining Company" or some other long-forgotten company was worth. As time went on, it was found by many, to their sorrow, that ore did not exist on every 40 acres in the northern part of Ottawa County.

It was in 1917 that father and George L. Coleman bought the paper which had been established as the "Miami Republican" back in 1900. The paper had a varied history of ups and downs. It had been consolidated with the "Miami Enterprise" in 1913, but a little later separated from the "Republican" and owned again by S. A. Roberts.

The new Miami News Publishing company changed the name of the paper to the Miami District Daily News. It carried this name until 1923, when it was merged with the old Record-Herald to become the present News-Record.

CARDIN

Just to the east of the Beaver Mine, another small mining camp was established. It was called Cardin after a land owner in that area by the name of Cardin. A 40-acre townsite was platted and lots sold in 1918. The one thing that made this place famous for the next few years was a boarding house. I do not remember the name of the place, but this was the best place to get a noon-day meal over a widely scattered area of activity in this fast-growing mining district.

The food was placed on a long table that seated some twenty-five persons at a time, the one with the longest reach faring the best! As fast as anyone finished his meal, he got out of the way for there were many hungry miners, supply men, salesmen, drill pushers, sight-see-ers, lease hounds, etc., waiting for a chance to get to the table. As fast as the food disappeared from the bowls and platters, it was replenished from the near-by kitchen. You could have all you could eat; all you needed was a good boarding-house reach and fifty cents!

The year 1917 brought in more activity than ever. The Company had some twenty drill rigs working on a contract basis: so much per foot, total depth to be determined by the Company according to whatever formation was encountered. The average depth of most of the drilling was about 300 feet, however, in certain areas it was necessary to drill to a depth of 400 feet or more to get through the ore-bearing formations.

Soon after the turn of the new year, it was apparent that war was getting closer between our country and Germany. After many of our ships had been destroyed by the German submarines despite repeated warnings by President Wilson, war was declared on April 6, 1917. On May 18, the Congress of the United States passed the Selective Service Act.

Soon thereafter a call was made for all male citizens between the ages of 21 and 35 to register for service. I was placed in a deferred class by the appeal board, since I was in an essential occupation necessary for the successful operation of the war. This class was not called for military service before the war ended on November 11, 1918.

Early in 1917, my father bought some stock in the State Bank of Miami; and on May 24, the bank was changed from a State to a National Bank. It was called the Ottawa County National Bank. On May 31, 1917, Father was elected president of this bank.

The company this year built two more mills on Section 30, east of the Blue Goose Mine. One was called the Jay Bird and the other the Woodchuck. These two mines were producing ore before the year closed, and added greatly to the company's production. The drilling on the Anna Beaver allotment was progressing satisfactorily, but instead of building a mill on this lease, the company decided to sell this property. The sale was made by Victor Rakowsky to a R. H. Channing of New York. A mill was built and the mine called the "Anna Beaver". It proved to be a very successful operation.

This year brought more active development on the Kansas leases. The Company continued drilling on the Webber land after the experience with sinking of the shaft on this lease the year previously. The contractor doing the drilling had encountered some very "cavey" ground, and was not making any progress or getting the holes below 260 or 270 feet deep.

The custom of the district was to go to the depth designated by the mining company, or no pay. I had been very lenient with this fellow, and had permitted him to quit on three different holes before he was as deep as I had instructed him to go. It was very tough drilling as any old driller will remember, when he hit what was called "hog chaw flint". It was plenty tough. It could be drilled by casing up the hole, and drilling on down with small tools. This usually caused the contractor to lose money, and naturally he avoided doing this if he could.

As I remember, it was the fourth hole in the immediate area, the fellow said he was as deep as he could go and wanted to quit. I told him he could quit any time he wished, but if he did not go to 300 feet he would not get any pay for the hole. I drove off and let him decide what he would do.

He decided to borrow a string of casing and small tools and try to finish the hole. This he did, and the drill rig was setting on top of the greatest ore deposit the company had yet discovered, as was later proven. As I recall, the ore was encountered at 280-285 feet in this particular hole. This was something like 600 feet east of where we had sunk the shaft and done previous prospecting without success.

So the old adage, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again" was again demonstrated.

Bad luck struck later in the year. The building where the company had its offices was completely destroyed by fire. The courthouse had been completed, and the county offices had been moved the year before. For several years afterwards if any maps or other matters pertaining to the Company's business could not be found, the answer was always the same, "Guess it burned up."

Father owned a building across the street which was being partly used for an assay office. The Company went across the street, moving in with Relling, the chemist. We scraped up a few old desks and chairs and were ready for business again.

It was during this time that George Stein was employed on a full-time basis by the company. It was very fortunate for the company that his maps, notes, tracings of mine surveys, etc. had not been moved to the company offices before the fire. He had done all the surveying work for the company on a fee basis since 1912.

As soon as plans could be drawn, father and Mr. Coleman let a contract for a building(early in 1918)on the corner of First and A Streets Northeast for the company offices. A room was also provided for the Miami District Daily News.

The war efforts of America were: first, to win the war; second, how to pay for it? Congress was working on new laws trying to find ways and means of paying the bills. The mining industry, which covered all classes of mining, and production of oil, was represented by an organization called "The American Mining Congress" with offices in Washington. The Tri-State district as it was now called, needed to have a representative in Washington who was familiar with the problems of the district in order to get fair treatment when new laws were passed.

A meeting was called and all companies operating in the district were represented. Mainly through father's efforts, A. Scott Thompson, of Miami, who had represented the company in all of its legal battles, was sent to Washington to represent the district. He had instructions to stay as long as necessary. Father was chairman of the committee to raise the funds to pay his expenses.

The following excerpt is taken from the publication of The American Mining Congress Journal, Dec. 1918, Vol.IV, No. 12, P. 43:

> "NOTE:--The American Mining Congress Committee on Revenue legislation consisted of Judge A. Scott Thompson, Miami, Oklahoma; Paul Armitage, New York; Edward L. Doheny, Los Angeles, California; George E. Holmes, New York and John C. Howard, Salt Lake City.
>
> This committee is the result of natural selection from more than three hundred different men from all sections of the country, who had had to do with this movement for a just application of war revenue taxation to the mining and oil industries. Each of these men has rendered valuable service in this behalf and many of them particularly valuable service. The members of the committee were able to give more largely of their time and developed such capacity for service as to make their selection a matter of course. The mining industry will never appreciate its indebtedness to these men. Particular credit is due the chairman of the committee, Judge A. Scott Thompson, who for months devoted his whole time to this work. His distinguished service in this behalf should be to him a crown of honor."--EDITOR

I think this article answered the question,"was Mr. Thompson's selection a good one?" He spent most of the year on the work in Washington. Some of the laws which were written at that time affecting mines, and production of oil, are still in effect and cover both industries.

The Company was still carrying on an extensive drilling campaign over a wide area in the district. The drilling on the Webber lease was showing good results and a shaft was started. Soon a mill was under construction. This mine was called "The Webber" and started production before the year 1918 ended.

Soon after the mill was under construction on the Webber lease and after the land had been sold by the original owners, a lawsuit was filed at Columbus, Kansas, against the Youses and the Commerce Company. The validity of the lease was the basis of the suit. It was another case of misguided information or advice of a lawyer to his client. When the case was tried, the Court held the lease was valid and in full force and effect. It was such a clear-cut decision by the Judge that the case was never appealed to a higher court. The same group of lawyers defended this case as had defended the Company in previous lawsuits.

The Company had a lease on 100 acres of land south and east of Picher which lease was acquired through the efforts of Ralph Tuthill, who carried an interest with the company in this operation. A drill rig was moved on and some ore encountered. The drilling continued and late in the year a shaft was started. It was decided to take a look at the ore before starting a mill. Another mill site had been drilled out on Section 30 north of the Jay Bird Mine, and a shaft sunk and mill built. This mill was called "The Bennie". It was on the Benjamin Quapaw allotment. The Bennie started production also in 1918.

The Armistice was signed November 11, 1918, and World War I came to a close with much rejoicing over the nation.

With the great expansion of ore production in the Tri-State District, it became evident that t the zinc ore production of the U. S. should have an organization representing the zinc industry.

A meeting was called and representatives from both the mining and smelting companies from over the United States met in St. Louis in 1918, and the American Zinc Institute was organized. Father was elected a Director of the organization. The main objective of the organization was to promote the use of zinc. It was very evident that as soon as the zinc smelters of Europe were repaired and went back into production, this country would have to meet strong competition from the European smelters. Since 1914 efforts had been made to perfect such an organization with a view to improving marketing conditions.

Miami was growing--it had doubled its population during 1917-18 and was in need of a larger hotel. A subscription list was started. Each person signing agreed to purchase the stock amount set apposite his name. It was not long until the stock had been subscribed and the plans were drawn by a Mr. Bellis of Kansas City, and a contract let for the construction of a building.

HOTEL MIAMI

The stock book showed my father and his partner, G. L. Coleman, as heading the list of subscribers. Ralph Tuthill was high on the list of subscribers, too, and for many years looked after the details of the operation of the business until it was sold. Father operated on the theory that the more people interested financially in the projects that help to build a community, the more boosters you would have to keep things moving along.

Early in 1919 a mill was built on the Grace Walker land southeast of Picher, and went into production. The mine was called the "Grace Walker". Grace's maiden name was Goodeagle.

A HOSPITAL IS BUILT

This same year the need for a hospital was growing more acute in the district. Father went to Oklahoma City and discussed the matter with the Secretary of the State Board representing the Baptist denomination in the State of Oklahoma. He proposed to raise the money from citizens of Miami and the district, to build a hospital and deed it to the Board if, in turn, they would guarantee to operate the institution with no profit ever accruing to anyone and all profits to be used for charity. The proposition was accepted by the Baptist State Board.

Father began immediately to take subscriptions for the building. His first donor on the list was the Commerce Company, and if I remember correctly it was for $50,000. He had pledges from several mining companies and one particular donation, I recall, was from two Baptists from Roanoke, Virginia. They had come to the District and had taken a mining lease and developed a pretty-good mine. They came to my father and asked him to sell it for them. Father in a short time sold the property. After the deal was closed and they asked him what his commission would be, he answered, "Nothing, but if you want to help out a good cause you could make a donation to the hospital fund."

They gave him a check for $15,000. Father never quit until he had enough pledges made to complete and fully equip the building.

THE NEW RAILROAD

Father thought that the Short Line railroad running from Miami to the mining district could be an important factor for the development of Miami. A movement was started to raise funds and purchase the Oklahoma, Kansas and Miami Interurban Railway Company. This was accomplished, and the name changed to the Northeast Oklahoma Traction Company.

Father was elected President of the new company and H. B. Cobban was soon employed as General Manager. Herb, as he was familiarly known to everyone in this district continued to serve in this capacity until his death on May 3, 1945.

The line was soon electrified and the passenger service was placed on an hourly schedule to give better service to and from the mining district. In 1924, the name was changed to the Northeast Oklahoma Railroad Company. This was done in order to get a better standing with the railroads of the country, which looked with disfavor on so-called "traction companies".

At the time, my father was called Miami's Number One Booster. If that was so, and I truly believe it was, I would class Herb Cobban as Miami's Number Two Booster. He donated a great deal of time promoting any cause for the betterment of Miami.

Soon after the purchase of the NEO, Ray McNaughton, a prominent lawyer of Miami, was employed to represent the railroad in all legal matters.

In 1919 the price of both lead and zinc began a downward trend. The year closed with an average price for Lead, $67 per ton; Zinc, $42.50 per ton, for the year.

In 1920, the company was drilling on the Barr land in Kansas, also on some of the producing leases. The number of drill rigs had been materially reduced from the peak of the development work carried on by the Company from 1915 through 1918. In the summer of 1920, the Company decided to lease some land in Craig County, about six or eight miles west of Welch and south to a line almost due west from Bluejacket.

LEASING FOR COAL

From the point west of Welch to the Kansas line, the Central Coal & Coke Company of Pittsburgh, Kansas, was leasing hundreds of acres of land. In this entire area, shallow strip mining of coal had been carried on in a small way, sometimes by the farmers who owned the land and in many cases just enough coal was dug for their own needs.

I did the leasing and by the end of the year had about 2000 acres of leases and some options to purchase the coal rights. There were two things which prompted my father to take this action: first, if coal was to be mined in that area to any great extent, the Northeast Oklahoma Railroad could be extended easily in that direction. Second, a steam power plant could be built to generate electricity for the mining district.

During this year, C. E. Youse, eldest son of the late O. M. Youse of Baxter Springs, married my youngest sister, Gladys. They made their home in Baxter Springs. Clare, as he was known over the district, along with his brother, Arthur, had continued in the business of contract drilling established by their father back in the Lincolnville days about 1903.

They did most of the drilling on the Kansas block of leases around the Blue Mound, spoken of earlier in this narrative, except during the rush period of 1917 and 1918.

In 1921, the Company started some prospect drilling in Craig County on what we called the Coal Leases. The first work was done over a widely scattered area, making tests down to a depth of two to three hundred feet. The first few months we found some coal. The best showing was at a depth of about 200 feet. The thickest vein was around 40 inches in thickness. This vein of coal was at a uniform level, the depth from the surface varying as the surface elevation changed.

Early in 1921, one phase of the Company's business(and a very important one to both the Company and the Indian owners of the land)was the question of the renewal of restrictions on the Quapaws.

LEASING PROBLEMS RENEWED

By an Act of Congress passed in 1895, the restrictions of the Quapaws were to continue for a period of twenty-five years from date of each individual trust patent.

As was shown earlier in this narrative, when the land of the Quapaws became valuable from a mining standpoint, the Secretary of the Interior through the office of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, took over the supervision of the leasing of restricted lands. An office was opened in Miami with a representative of the Office of Indian Affairs. Soon, thereafter, the U. S. Geological Survey had a representative also in the office to advise the agent in charge as to the proper methods of mining. This agent approved or disapproved all leasing or sub-leasing of the restricted lands before they went to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs and finally to the Secretary of the Interior for final action.

One rule the Company had and never deviated from, as long as father lived, was first to have the Indian land owner give his approval by signing all leases and contracts before sending them in for approval by the Department, even though some of them signed only by a "mark". This was not necessary, according to the ruling of the office of Indian affairs. Father took the position that he had been dealing with these people for many years before the Department took over their affairs, and he would continue to ask their approval before making any deals concerning their lands.

There was to be a hearing in Washington covering the extension of the restrictions of the Quapaws. My father, Mr. Thompson and I, with several others from Miami attended. (This is the most beautiful city in the east to me. I have often thought what a good break the country had that George Washington was a surveyor by trade for he certainly laid out a most wonderful plan for the Nation's Capitol.)

The old Raleigh Hotel seemed to be the headquarters at that time, for Oklahoma people. The first evening after our arrival, Father invited Congressman and Mrs. Hastings, of Muskogee, to have dinner with us at the Hotel. Mr. Hastings was a very able man. He was on the Committee of Indian Affairs of the House of Representatives and was advocating the extension of restrictions for twenty-five years.

Most of the older members of the tribe were also in favor of this extension. On March 31, 1921, Congress did pass a law extending the restrictions on certain members of the Quapaws for an additional twenty-five years from date of trust patent, which no doubt was for the best interest of all parties concerned. The Quapaws,, upon whose lands the restrictions were extended, owned some of the most valuable mining land in the Tri-State mining field.

Soon after the law extending the restrictions was passed, the question of the renewal of Indian leases was being discussed by many in the district. The Company had many acres of the restricted Indian lands under lease. It was of much concern to the land owners, the mine operators, and the Department of Indian Affairs what policy would be established on this question by the Secretary of the Interior.

Hearings were held in the District, also in Washington, D. C. before Mr. Burke, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. At one hearing in Washington, I especially remember it appeared that most of the operators of the district as well as all the lawyers from the surrounding territory, were present.

My father, Mr. Harvey, Scott Thompson, George Stein and Al F. Williams, an attorney from Columbus, Kansas, and I were there from the Commerce Company. A policy was eventually established and followed by Commissioner Burke which seemed to be satisfactory to all parties concerned, at least as far as Commerce Company leases were concerned. They were approved before Albert B. Fall was appointed as Secretary of the Interior by the new Harding administration. This was of much satisfaction to the Company as later Secretary Fall got into very serious difficulties regarding his action in certain lease transactions.

During the year father decided to go to New York and discuss financing with some brokerage firms. He asked me to go along with him. This was my first trip to New York and naturally I was quite happy to go along. He had an appointment with Harriman and Company, also Merrill Lynch and Company.

The first appointment was with Harriman and Company. I cannot recall the name of the man we discussed the business with, however, he was not very enthusiastic about financing short-line railroads or for power plants. Father advised him he was not ready to raise funds, but thought it advisable to make some contact with the proper firm when the development he had in mind was advanced enough to really talk seriously about it.

He thanked the gentleman for taking the time with us, and we left. On the way back to the hotel, Dad made the comment, "That fellow doesn't know there is anything in the country west of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania!"

The next day we had an appointment with a Mr. Yard, of Merrill Lynch and Company. He was a different type of man than the fellow we had met the day before. He spent the morning with us, trying to get all the information possible about the Tri-State District and what they might do to help when the time came to raise funds to finance the project Father had in mind. He took us out to lunch and incidentally, made a couple of friends for his firm out Oklahoma way. For several years afterwards, I was never in New York that I did not call him or go to see him.

Late in 1921, the Ottawa County National Bank bought the assets of the Miami Trust and Savings Bank. Business had been slow in the District, and the Trust and Savings Bank had gotten into some difficulties.

At the close of the year, the mining business was at a very low ebb. Prices of lead and zinc for the year averaged $52 per ton for lead and $22.50 for zinc. A large number of mines in the district were closed down. The Company had most of its properties closed at the end of the year.

The Webber Mine had continued to operate, but was not selling the zinc concentrates which were being piled up at the mine.

The year, 1922, started off slowly, but before long ore prices began coming up a little. The company was drilling on the Harvey Gordon land south and west of the Wilbur land, just over the line in Oklahoma. We found some pretty good ore but at a shallower depth than the ore in the Wilbur land, which had been giving us so much trouble in developing.

A shaft was started on the Gordon land; when completed, a mill was built. This was called the "Pelican". A mill was built also on the Newakis Hampton land just north of Commerce. A mill was operated on this land in the early days of the Commerce field and operated by The Quapaw Mining Company. The Company drilled out an ore body to the east of where the original mill was located. This was called the Scammon Hill Mine. The Company also built a mill on the Gordon-McBee land (Emma Gordon). A lease had been obtained the year before after the original mining done on this land had been abandoned.(This was not a new mill, but an old mill had been rebuilt). It was called the Gordon-McBee.

The Westside Mill was built on the Barr land in Kansas, east of the Vinegar Zinc Company. These four mines went into production during the year.

After several years of work on the Wilbur land, a shaft was started, but the company was not convinced of the extent of the ore deposit. As has been stated, so much of the drilling had not been very satisfactory. This was another case where the shaft would be completed to the ore and some drift work done before making the decision on any plans for a mill.

The Company continued to do some drilling in Craig County on the coal leases. It had not been very satisfactory during this period, but had enough encouraging results to continue on with the work.

The year closed with ore prices in the district gradually improving, with the price of zinc up to $34 and lead to $74 per ton, average for the year. 400,000 tons of zinc concentrates were produced from the Oklahoma-Kansas section of the district in 1922. In 1916, this same area produced only 55,000 tons. By 1924, there were 135 or 140 producing mines capable of producing much more ore than was being produced. The preceding year the problems facing the mining companies in the district was endeavoring to work out some plan to mine all the ore that could be marketed, but not to produce to exceed the demand. The law of supply and demand was still in operation.

It was evident that over-production meant lower prices, so there had to be an answer to the question. At each session of the Legislatures of the three states of Oklahoma, Kansas and Missouri, many problems were coming up in the form of new laws being introduced, some of which would be helpful; some of which would be a detriment to the mining companies and their employees.

Again, the problem of safety measures had to be studied for the benefit of both the employer and the employee. These problems were being discussed by the operators and especially by the lawyers representing the Company. It was the advice of these men that the companies definitely could not, by agreement or collusion, do anything to force the prices of ore up. The law of survival finally prevailed, and somebody came to the conclusion that "self preservation is the first law of nature."

Father spent a great deal of time during this year, advocating some kind of organization to help solve the problems facing the District. Eventually, in the Fall of 1923, the Tri-State Zinc and Lead Ore Producers Association was formed at a meeting when approximately 95 per cent of the producers of the district were represented.

A Board of Directors was elected and father was chosen as its first President. He recommended Scott Thompson be employed by this new association to steer its course from a legal standpoint. Soon after this, Mr. Thompson, who had represented the Company in legal matters since early after its origin, on a fee basis, was employed on a full-time basis to represent only the Commerce Company and the Tri-State Producers Association.

The next person to be employed by the Association was a young engineer by the name of Julian Conover, of Wisconsin. He was employed as Secretary.(Julian spent several years in the district. He went from here as Secretary of the American Zinc Institute in New York; from there to Washington, D. C. as Secretary of the American Mining Congress where he is still on the job).

During 1921 and 1922, the Company had only operated mines on a part-time basis and by early 1923, it had approximately 45,000 tons of zinc concentrates in one large pile stacked up at the

Webber Mine in Kansas. This had been produced when zinc ore was selling between $20 and $30 per ton. The Company began to dispose of this when ore reached the price of $40 per ton, and some was sold as high as $50 per ton.

The only mill built this year by the Company, was on the Little Greenback allotment, and called the "Bob White".

During this year, 1923, Father and I again visited New York. He had an appointment with Charles M. Schwab, President of the Bethlehem Steel Company. Mr. Schwab had recently been in the District. After looking over the mining field, he apparently came to the conclusion that the Commerce Company had plenty of zinc if it were available.

After we arrived in New York, Mr. Schwab came to our hotel and spent some time discussing the Tri-State District. When he was leaving he invited us to his home the next evening for dinner. We arrived at the appointed time, and were met at the door by the butler who ushered us into the library and announced that Mr. Schwab would be in shortly.

I feel certain he advised our hosts we were in business suits for in about twenty minutes Mr. Schwab greeted us, dressed in a business suit, and Mrs. Schwab had on a plain dress. However, when we went into the dining room, two more couples came in, the ladies in evening dresses and the men dressed in tails.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Schwab were very clever people. After a fine dinner we returned to the library, and after coffee and chit-chat, all excused themselves except Mr. Schwab and the business which had brought us to New York was kicked around for a couple of hours.

We were in the city two or three more days. Nothing ever came of this trip. One might say, there was no meeting of minds.

A NEW MINING PROCESS

The oil flotation process had been introduced in the district, but was not used very extensively. The Company decided to install the equipment and give it a trial. Our first experiment did n not work out so well. Experienced operators for the process were rather scarce.

We employed a young fellow by the name of Brown, who claimed to be a metallurgist, and gave him a free hand to install the equipment and get it into operation. He got along fairly well, but when cold weather came along;he began to have trouble; and one week-end in December he left between days, driving one of the Company cars. The car was recovered in El Paso, Texas, but Brown has never been heard from. However, he did the Company a favor by leaving. In just a few weeks after he disappeared, a young fellow came into the office and introduced himself to me and said he was looking for a job. He said he was a metallurgist and had had experience in the West with the Anaconda Copper Company of Butte, Montana. His name was Elmer Isern. This was in January, 1924.

I had the title of General Manager for the Company at that time. Mr. Isern was employed and advised to get busy and get the oil flotation equipment straightened out. Elmer was a positive character who stated, "that was no problem". He was right, and in a very short time the process was working satisfactorily.

In a few months he had made a written report showing how much ore the Company was losing every day, going into tailing piles. At this time, John Newton, who had been with the company since 1916, was Superintendent of Mines in Oklahoma, and Fred Gartung was Superintendent of Mines in Kansas.

Mr. Isern had no easy task convincing the early-day mill men in the district that the ball mill and fine grinding was going to replace the long-used method of rolls for fine grindings and tables to clean the fine ores. During the year, oil flotation process was installed in the mills and the tailing losses were gradually cut down.

The shaft work at the Wilbur Mine was the most difficult job the company ever experienced. The water seemed to be in never-decreasing amounts. More money had been spent on this lease trying to sink this shaft than any dozen shafts the Company had sunk to date. There was no place to stop now. Too much money had already gone down the drain--or the drill hole--so the Company kept "pouring the cobs" to it, an expression used by miners on the job. It meant, "Just keep the boilers fired up with a full head of steam and the pumps running!"

By the end of the year they had the water down to the ore, and drift work started. The results of the prospect drifts began to disclose an ore deposit that looked like the long and expensive effort was going to be justified.

Another thing was beginning to "jell" as the saying goes. In George Stein's mind, which came from an experience the Company had had a year or so previously when George recommended that we pipe compressed air from one of the mines to another small operation several hundred feet away.

This would be cheaper than installing another compressor as there was ample capacity at the mine to furnish all the air needed at the second operation. The Company was then using gas engines for power. It was saving the cost of two gas engine operators as well as the cost of new equipment. Mr. Stein began to make some estimates of distance from a central point to all the operating mines of the company, with the idea of piping compressed air to all the mines.

In 1924, Father was elected to the Board of the American Mining Congress and continued to serve on that board until his death.

The year closed with conditions over the district in pretty good shape, price-wise. The ore prices for the year were approximately $105 per ton for lead, and $40 per ton for zinc concentrates.

1925 opened up what looked like another prosperous year for the district. A mill was built on the Wilbur land and immediately upon completion went into production. This mine proved to be another good producer of both lead and zinc.

I recall it was this year that my father became interested in the Grand River Dam project which had for some years been under discussion. He became interested through an engineer, a Mr. Salsbury, who had done some engineering work on the project. Father employed him to assist George Stein on getting up some cost data on the ideas which George and father had been discussing regarding the cost of producing electric power from coal, fuel oil, gas and hydro-electric.

The first idea to crystallize into action was the central compressed air unit located on the NE quarter of the NE quarter of 25-29-22, fee land owned by the Company. This was to furnish compressed air for all underground drilling for the Blue Goose, the Jay Bird, Beaver, Pelican, Wilbur, Webber and Westside Mines.

During this period, father had a friend in Joplin, a Mr. Robert Keith, who made a business of promoting or selling mining properties. They had discussed the sale of the Company mines at different times and as I recall, it was during this year that he came to father and informed him that the United States Steel Corporation was interested in buying some zinc properties.

Soon after this, Mr. Keith came to Miami and introduced Mr. Floyd Weed to father and asked to make a study of the underground workings and drill records of the Company, for the steel corporation.

Mr. Weed was granted permission and George Stein was instructed to give him all of the information he had, covering the data of the Company property. Also, George was to accompany him to inspect the underground mining operation.

Mr. Weed spent about two months on this project, as I recall. Not long after he finished his investigation, Mr. Ed Ellis, of Birmingham, Alabama, who was in charge of the Tennessee Iron and Coal Company operation, a subsidiary to the U. S. Steel Corporation, called and invited my father to come down to Birmingham. He wanted to show him their company's new blast furnace operations and would like, at the same time, to discuss the zinc properties of the Commerce company with him.

Father accepted the invitation and he and I spent a couple of days in Birmingham. The Steel Company had a large steel plant located there and it was a very interesting operation. After the sight-seeing and much talk about the zinc business, Mr. Ellis asked if we would go to New York with him and meet Mr. Gary, the President of the Steel Corporation.

Father consented and on our arrival in New York we stopped at the Commodore Hotel.

We met Mr. Ellis at the Steel Corporation office and had a pleasant visit with Mr. Gary. No business was discussed and after a short while, Mr. Gary announced that he had a luncheon engagement and was sorry he could not go with us to lunch. This was the cue, so we went back to the Hotel and had lunch with Mr. Ellis and the rest of the day was taken up with much conversation and the final question: What would it take to buy the Company--lock, stock and barrel--or words to that effect?

Father gave him a figure and Ellis turned a little pale and said he would see us the next day.

The following day, Ellis called on the phone and said he was having some kind of a meeting late in the afternoon and asked if it would be all right to come the following day. The request was granted, naturally, but Dad turned from the phone and told me what the call was, with the comment, "I guess it was a little hard for them to digest."

The next day, Mr. Ellis came to the hotel and said they were very much interested in the purchase of the Commerce Company holdings but were unable to meet the price quoted. However, he had been instructed to make an offer. He handed father a small card with a lot of figures written on it in pencil. The first line stated, "We will pay so much cash" then so many first mortgage bonds payable beginning one year from date and continuing for a ten-year period until all were paid; all bearing a fair rate of interest.

Father read the card and might have had time to read it over the second time, but I doubt it.

He passed the card to me and said, "Mr. Ellis, it has been nice discussing this matter with you and I thank you for the offer, but I am not interested. You have underestimated the value of these properties."

"No, Mr. Robinson" Ellis replied, "We have figured it from every angle and we feel that we have made a fair offer."

There were no further propositions. Two strong characters had met. They were both standing pat. We bade Mr. Ellis good-bye and left that night for Oklahoma.

Naturally the incident was commented on throughout the district that the Steel Company had turned down the Commerce Company properties.

A few months after this, Tom Wrightly, who was in charge of the district mining operations for the American Metal Company, came into the office and introduced Dr. Sussman, President of the American Metal Company, to my father.

During the conversation, Dr. Sussman told father he would like to go down in some of the Company mines to study mining practices used by the company. He was granted this request and Mr. Stein went with him to the Webber and Westside Mines. At that time, these were the two best producing mines the Company owned.

George tells the story which was very funny, if you knew the two men involved. Tom Wrightly was a nervous, enthusiastic fellow and Dr. Sussman was a large, fat, Jewish fellow, who talked with a noticeable Jewish accent. George and the doctor had stopped at the bottom of the stope and in a very high drift in the Webber mine. Tom was on ahead and climbed up several feet on the broken dirt. All at once he hollered to the

Doctor to come up: "This is the best damn dirt I've ever seen."

The Doctor finally got up to where Tom was standing, and puffing profusely he said, "Now, Tom-mye, it's not Too damn goot!" He didn't want his superintendent to brag too much on the other fellow's mine, especially when he was looking around for some zinc mines to purchase.

Not long after this incident, Mr. Wrightly came to the office and asked father if he would go to New York and discuss the sale of the Commerce properties with Dr. Sussman. Father's answer was that he did not think it would be necessary; that the Metal Company probably thought the Company mines were on the market, but assured him that this was not the case. He explained to him that just recently the Steel Company had endeavored to purchase the properties, but had underestimated the values involved. He finally told Mr. Wrightly that the first time he was back East he would be glad to visit with Dr. Sussman and see what his ideas were on values in the Tri-State District.

Several months after this, father agreed to meet with the officers of the American Metal Company. I went with him on this trip. We stopped at the Pennsylvania Hotel and were met on our arrival by Mr. Wrightly. We were asked to meet with Dr. Sussman and three or four other officials of the company, and had lunch with them. For the next day or so, most of the discussions were with a Mr. Steel. I recall we were in New York less than a week on this particular occasion.

No price was even mentioned as all the discussion was centered around the tonnage of ores contained on the Company's holdings. Their engineers thought George Stein's estimate of tonnages was figured too high: father was of the opinion that his figures were very conservative. The matter was closed on this basis. We returned to Miami.

Early in 1926, the Company built a central blacksmith shop and steel sharpening plant adjacent to the warehouse, at Cardin, and thus did away with the blacksmith shops at all the mines. Drill steel was collected each day at the mines and the sharpened steel delivered each morning. Underground mine cars and much other equipment was built at this shop. The modern equipment installed resulted in more efficient work and the saving of much labor, all of which figured in as another small savings to lower the overall cost of producing a ton of concentrates.

During the year 1926, the Company sold the Woodchuck Mine which consisted of 40 acres(the SE½ of the NE¼ of Sec.20-29-23). It was sold to a New York financier by the name of Lewie Witcher. The transaction was handled, I believe, by Vic Rakowsky. It was called, The Oklahoma Woodchuck Lead and Zinc Company.

During the fall of 1926, Mr. Stein, W. J. Martin(the engineer in charge of maintenance for the Northeast Oklahoma Railroad)and a Mr. Salsbury, were compiling a lot of cost data on constructing a power plant for generating electric power for the Company's mining operation and the railroad. During this period the idea of extending the NEO to the coal deposits to the west was fading out of the picture. There were definitely large deposits of coal in the areas described elsewhere in this article. The larger deposits would be deep-shaft mining and from an economical cost basis would probably never be mined as long as natural gas for domestic consumption was in abundance in the central west.

The Central Coal and Coke Company had purchased several thousand acres of coal rights in this area. This is written in 1958; none of the coal has, as yet, been mined.) Late in the Fall of this year, Stein was about ready to recommend diesel oil engines for the power plant and different makes of engines were being inspected. The Worthington Manufacturing Company of Cleveland, Ohio, had been throughttheir sales representative, Jim Smith(who now lives at Baxter Springs, Kansas) trying to sell engines for the plant. Mr. Smith came to the office and asked to have a conference with George Stein and me. During the conversation, he asked us to go to Cleveland with him to get first-hand information on costs and operating data of their product, as well as to see some of the equipment in operation.

He remarked, "By the way, I have three tickets for the football game at Champagne, Illinois, next Saturday, when Illinois plays Michigan. Why don't we go and see the game, and from there go on to Cleveland?"

All I remember saying was, "Jim, quit twisting my arm--we'll go!"

We went to the game. Red Grange, the "galloping ghost" was going strong at that time for Illinois and Bennie Freedman was at the height of his career for Michigan.

We went to Cleveland and tried hard to give Jim a break but the Nordburg people of Milwaukee had what appeared to be the best engine and Nordburg engines were eventually purchased. However, Jim had sold us the large compressor plant the year before.

In January, 1927, the decision was made to employ a purchasing agent for the Company. Up to this time, some of the buying had been done at the office in Miami by Mr. Tuthill, some at the warehouse by Mr. Duffee and still other at the mines by the Superintendent in charge. W. H. Harrison, a former manager of another mining company, was employed for this job and all purchases of all supplies were to be made by him.

This caused a great deal of "yow-yowing" by mine superintendents and ground foremen. It was only natural for the salesmen over the district to pass out cigars, etc. at times, and when they stopped calling at the mines the flow of cigars, etc.(especially the "etc." around Christmas)soon dried up.

Mr. Harrison organized a sales force and went after the supply business. The Central Shop and Steel Sharpening Plant was also placed under his supervision. The change of policy centering around these activities was soon accepted and was definitely a change for the better in this department.

The Blue Goose Mill was destroyed by fire and was rebuilt in 1927, with many changes in the flow sheet, designed by Elmer Isern. This made for a better milling practice than was used in the old mill.

It was either in late 1926 or 1927, when Robert Keith, of Joplin, came into the office and introduced Mr. George Fowler to my father. Mr. Fowler was a noted geologist and had recently been working for the Anacondo Copper Company. From this meeting and future discussions, Mr. Fowler was given permission to make a study of the Commerce Company's properties. The understanding was that if some agreement could be arrived at, which might be beneficial to both companies, such agreement should include the building ing in the area around Miami an electrolytic smelter and power plant.

These studies and conferences continued both in Miami and in New York until an agreement was drafted in April, 1927, giving the Anaconda Company the right to bring in accountants, engineers, geologists, and lawyers to make a thorough investigation of the Commerce Company holdings in the district.

These holdings, comprised fee lands and leases to the extent of approximately 10,000 acres, including concentrating plants and a diesel power plant then under construction. A study also was to be made of the feasibility of building either a hydro-electric or a steam power plant and if, after the investigation, enough zinc concentrates were assured to justify the building of an electric smelter, then a new company would be organized and a certain amount of bonds would be issued to the owners of the shares of the Commerce Company, and Anaconda would buy a certain amount of preferred shares to build the smelter and power plant.

During these negotiations my father had some serious physical ailments develop. The first sign of a serious nature to show up with him since he was in Rochester at Mayo Clinic in 1920. At that time he might have had a slight stroke. He had been advised to "slow down" and take it easy, which he did for a time, but as he began to feel himself again, he went along as he had for years, driving ahead with all the force at his command. Each year he would promise to slow down as soon as certain things were accomplished, but as usual, each year something came along to keep him from keeping that promise to himself.

He went to the Sanitarium at Battle Creek, Michigan. He had a great deal of confidence in a Dr. Mortensen there, the heart specialist. Father was suffering from extremely high blood pressure and hardening of the arteries.

It became necessary for someone to go to New York. Mr. Keith and I went to Battle Creek to see father, then on to New York where we met Mr. Fowler. We were there for about ten days.

Soon thereafter, a full crew of people from Anaconda Company, some from Montana and some from New York, came to Miami and established a headquarters at the Miami Hotel, and started on their investigation.

This proved to be the most thorough examination the Company ever experienced. I cannot recall the exact time when Mr. C. F. Kelly, the President of Anaconda visited the district, but it was before any contract had been drawn.

He spent several days looking over the district. I remember one instance: we were standing at one of the shafts watching a first motion hoist jerking out cans of dirt from the mine. This seemed to intrigue him because this method of hoisting mine dirt out of the ground was peculiar to this district and much different than the method used in deep shaft methods of the west.

After watching for at least fifteen minutes--the cans come up at such a rapid rate and drop back and up again--Mr. Kelly turned to father and remarked, "I'd like to see the Irishman who's kicking those tubs up here!"

We drove to the site which father had picked out as a location for a steam plant and a smelter.(Strange things happen. The Goodrich plant is now located on part of the land that was shown to Mr. Kelly.) The Grand River Dam Project came in also for discussion at this same time.

The evening before Mr. Kelly left for New

York, father had him out for dinner at his new home, recently completed. The room father was so proud of was in the basement: On the wall he had had a scene painted of one of his favorite fishing places down on the Cowskin River, at Ed Millner's camp.

After spending several weeks in Miami, the crew making the investigation completed its work and departed. Things began to get back to normal again around the office. Father had returned home, but was spending most of his time away from the office.

He would get up early as usual, go out to the dairy farm and sometimes have breakfast with Mr. and Mrs. Manness. The Company had built some lakes, or ponds, not far from the dairy farm. Four dams were built across the natural ravines, which formed four fairly good-sized lakes. A deep well was drilled and a supply of fresh water kept the lakes full if rains were not sufficient during the summer months. The lakes were stocked with bream, crappie and bass. A club-house had been built and was used for company meetings.

Henry Giesing was safety engineer for the Company. He had regular meetings there with the mine superintendents and ground foremen to discuss safety measures in order to cut down on accidents. The plan of a suggestion box at each mine was used to try to get all employees interested in making suggestions on anything that would help on safety measures or make savings for the Company.

These suggestions were discussed and any plan adopted won a cash prize for the employee making the suggestion.

The farm, the clubhouse and lakes, occupied a great deal of my father's time during his convalescent period during the summer. He would fish and had cots where he could rest when he did not care to fish. He and Mr. Walker, the caretaker, would discuss plans at great length, how to get rid of the turtle crop which seemed to be multiplying faster than the fish.

Later during this year, a letter from Mr. Kelly to father, stated that his group was ready to have a meeting at their office at 25 Broadway in New York. Father was not physically able to make the trip. Mr. Scott Thompson and I, therefore, left for New York, not knowing from Mr. Kelly's letter what was going to take place when we arrived there.

On the way there Mr. Thompson asked what my opinion was on the matter and as I recall, I told him "Your guess is as good as mine." Two things could happen: they would either announce that they were ready to close the deal; or they would find something they did not like and call off the negotiations.

We arrived at the office about 10:30 in the morning. We were shown into a large conference room and told that Mr. Kelly would be in shortly We waited about twenty or thirty minutes before Kelly came in. Immediately, after shaking hands he inquired as to my father's health and expressed his sorrow about his illness. He introduced a Mr. Mitchell who was the head of the law firm for his company; also, a younger lawyer, a Mr. Wolf, whom we both knew as he had spent a month in Miami examining titles, etc.

Also introduced was a Mr. Sourwine, one of . the sharpest fellows I ever met when it came to compiling a lot of figures and coming up with what always appeared to be the right answer. Also present was Mr. Dwyer, a vice-president of the

Company who, too, had been in Miami during the investigation.

Mr. Kelly opened this conference by making a brief statement concerning their company's interest in the survey of the Tri-State district. However, being unfamilair with Indian titles in Oklahoma, he had asked Mr. Mitchell, their attorney, to go into detail concerning a lawsuit pending against the Commerce Company on one lease covering the allotment of Anna Beaver and consisting of 200 acres. This particular lease was developed by the Commerce Company and sold back in 1917.

Mr. Mitchell covered a lot of territory in about fifteen minutes explaining why he could not recommend to Mr. Kelly the title on this particular lease. Therefore, he had advised him to turn down the deal and call off the negotiations.

Mr. Thompson asked for the privilege of explaining just what was involved and that there was no doubt in his mind about the outcome of the case. It was another case of letting the courts settle the issue.

It soon developed, however, that the matter was closed, so we shook hands with Mr. Kelly and thanked him for the time and effort he had given the matter; that we appreciated very much their desire to try to work out a very complicated mining and smelting arrangement.

I advised Mr. Kelly that the question of Indian titles in Oklahoma had never been a stumbling block for my father, and told him of the answer father gave the lawyer in Galena, Kansas, back in 1916 when this lawyer was trying to get him to make a settlement and pay off and get a law suit dismissed.

I made the remark that the question of Indian titles did not disturb the Company, for Mr. Thompson was looked on in Oklahoma as an authority on Indian titles, especially pertaining to the Quapaws. We shook hands all around and bade them good-bye. We stayed in New York one night; took in a show and left the next evening for Miami.

When I went to make the report to father after our return to Miami, I got the feeling that he showed a slight disappointment for the first time in all the different deals on which he had worked. On other occasions he always seemed relieved when the matter was turned down, because he was a natural-born trader and enjoyed working up a deal on the mining properties. But I do not think he really ever wanted to make an outright sale.

The last arrangement with Mr. Kelly had seemed to suit him much better because he felt as though he were doing something that would benefit Miami as well as the Company.

Incidentally, the suit Mr. Mitchell turned the deal down on, was won by the Company by a decision of the Circuit Court of Appeals; was then appealed to the Supreme Court of the U. S. and the highest court in the nation would not hear the case. Therefore, the Circuit Court decision was final. Another chapter had been closed on Indian titles in Oklahoma so far as the Commerce Company was concerned.

During this year the Power Plant was built and Nordburg diesel engines installed and the plant went into operation.

This proved to be a very constructive move for the Company, although father had some opposition within our own organization during early discussion on the subject. The plant was paid for by the savings in power costs in approximately seven year' operation.

At the time the power plant went into operation, an Electric Service Department was built, adjacent to the plant, and all electrical equipment handled and repaired at this point.

THE MIAMI CLINIC

It was during this year, through father's efforts, and his friendship with Dr. Wormington, that he was instrumental in the forming of the Miami Clinic, composed of Dr. Wormington, internal medicine; Dr. DeArman, surgeon; and Dr. Pinnell, eye, ear, nose and throat specialist.

A contract was made with the new clinic to take care of all mine accidents, etc., for the Commerce Company. At the same time, all hospital cases were to be cared for at the Miami Baptist Hospital.

Doctors DeArman and Pinnell had been operating a small hospital. In the agreement with the clinic they were to close their hospital and do their practice at the Baptist Hospital. Through this arrangement, all parties concerned, were benefitted.

The year closed with the average price of both lead and zinc at a lower level than the preceding year. Lead was $87 and zinc, $38 per ton. The production for the Miami-Picher district was around 67,000 tons of lead and approximately 400,000 tons of zinc.

The high point of production for this same area in 1925, was 103,000 tons of lead and 555,000 tons of zinc. The Tri-State Producers Association had been very active all year trying to balance the production of concentrates with the demand. The Commerce Company had operated on a part-time basis and by this time the four and five-day week was beginning to show up in the district.

Costs of production were going up and each year it was becoming necessary to make economies in production costs when and wherever possible.

During 1928, a situation developed on some leases in Section 24 and Section 13, which appeared to be on the west edge of the mining field. A great amount of drilling had been done on these restricted Indian allotments without developing any great amount of ore reserves on any one of the leases. Adjoining this acreage was a lease which was unrestricted, with only a limited amount of ore reserve.

The question of building mills on each of these four leases was the topic of discussion. Mr. Isern had advocated centrallmilling almost from the time he was employed by the Company. This seemed to be the ideal place to try out his plan for central milling, if permission could be obtained from the Department of Indian Affairs, permitting the co-mingling of ores from the different allotments.

The procedure had never been used in the district and I was very skeptical of obtaining permission from the Office of Indian Affairs, to break the long-established custom. I discussed the plan with father, and he was of the same opinion but said he would be much in favor of trying to get the approval.

Mr. Isern first discussed the plan with Mr. Charles Williams, of the U. S. Geological Survey, whose office was in the Quapaw Indian Agency, Miami. I heard nothing from Isern for several weeks regarding the matter.

Eventually, he reported that Mr. Williams had asked for more information, primarily on his plan for sampling ores and that he was drawing plans for a sampling mill.

The only further progress reported during the year was that Mr. Andrews, in charge of the office of Indian Affairs, was making a study of the plan, also, and seemed to be much interested.

There was no immediate plan to build a mill on any one of the leases. Ore prices were still on a downward trend, and production over the District was much greater than the demand.

(This plan of Central Milling was later approved by Mr. Andrews and sent to the Department in Washington and approved. The four leases, three restricted,and one unrestricted, were mined and milled over what was called the Bird Dog Mill, the first centralized milling in the Tri-State District).

My father's health appeared to be improving by early Spring of this year, and he was coming to the office each day and staying until noon. During the late summer he asked Mr. Thompson and me to go to Tulsa and see Mr. Wash Hudson and notify him that the necessary papers would be returned to him, relative to the Grand River Dam rights. Hudson was then the attorney for the group which had originally been granted the water rights on Grand River, by the State.

Late this same year I began to realize that father was giving up the fight which he had been waging since my earliest memory. He was never one to sit down and wait for somebody else to make the first move in the great quest for life. He would take the initiative and when he thought he was right, no amount of argument would change his thinking.

In the beginning of his career in the new country, then called Indian Territory, he was appointed Guardian by the Court of a little Indian boy by the name of Arthur Buffalo, whose parents were dead. When father discovered that several hundred acres of land had been what appeared to him illegally acquired when they belonged to Arthur through inheritance, he started looking for a lawyer who believed as he did. Eventually, by guaranteeing the fee and expenses himself, the case was brought to trial and after several years of litigation, the courts held that the land belonged to Arthur Buffalo. Father was granted a fee of $250 by the court, as Guardian. This, I think, shows what I mean about his principles. He believed he was right and went ahead and backed up his own judgment. It meant more to him to have his judgment confirmed than any remuneration he might receive from his efforts.

It has been stated by some that the successful man in the game of life is the one who guesses right more often than he guesses wrong. If that is the method of measurement, I am sure father stands high in the opinion of many who knew him.

I remember that when I attended the National Democratic Convention in Houston, Texas, in 1928, meeting blind Senator Tom Gore, of Oklahoma. I went up and introduced myself to him and said, "I am J. F. Robinson's son of Miami, Oklahoma." In his very dignified way he said, "Son, if you are half as good a man as your father you will be away above the average."

In the winter of 1928, father discussed with me what, in his opinion, should be done relative to the banking situation in Miami. He was of the opinion that the First National was in serious difficulties and would need some help before long.

He thought the Ottawa County National should make a deal with the First National and combine the two institutions, retaining the name of the First National Bank; then build a new banking room on the corner where the Ottawa County Bank then stood.

This was his last plan for a constructive move which he felt should be made to help divert any financial difficulties for Miami and the surrounding trade territory.

He never really cared too much for the banking business. He had only one theory which he always firmly espoused: Don't try to be the biggest bank in town but always keep in mind, make it the safest bank in town. And remember this: with my own money I can loan to anyone I please, through friendship or if I choose I can give it away. But keep in mind that when a bank loans money it is not theirs; it belongs to the people who entrust it to the bank for safe keeping. When you loan it be sure you are making a safe loan that with all reasonalbe expectation will be repaid.

When the two institutions were combined, the Ottawa County made a 100 per cent dividend, and the other made a 100 per cent assessment in order to adjust the assets. The merger was made in March, 1929.

Earlier in this story I mentioned my father's connection with the Baptist Church. He remained throughout his lifetime a faithful member. He was never a dogmatic, sanctimonious individual. He was always a liberal giver. He was a tither and for that reason kept a close account of his income.

His method of helping weak churches and churches backward in doing what they were capable of doing, was to go to the leaders of the church and offer to match dollars with the congregation. Every time they raised a dollar he would give one. In most cases the congregation did not know where the extra money was coming from. He went on the theory that any church or individual always received the most benefit if they were doing their part, no matter how great or how small.

In 1925, through his efforts, the Baptists of Oklahoma instituted a state-wide debt-paying campaign to pay off the indebtedness of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma.

If I remember correctly, the indebtedness amounted to something like $300,000. The churches over the state responded and the campaign was brought to a successful conclusion. Father traveled over the state with Dr. Bruner, director of the campaign. Father made no public speeches but made his best contribution by getting together with two or three leaders of the church and getting them enthused first.

Brother Jim Wiley, heretofore mentioned, telephoned father and asked him to come to Muskogee, as there were some very good prospects there for large contributions. He went and received one of the largest individual contributions of the campaign. However, he made two or three trips before closing up the deal.

Father was interested in all public and civic matters. One year the Public Schools of Miami ran short of funds and the announcement was made that the schools would have to close much ahead of the regular closing time as the city had no funds to complete the term. He promoted the

Commerce Company to make a contribution to pay expenses until the regular school term closed.

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Father was active on the recreational side of his life. I thought that this would help to prolong his life, however he never did anything half-way, going out whole-heartedly for whatever activity in which he engaged. He related to me stories of his baseball-playing days when he was young. He had one story that he always enjoyed telling: He was playing on the Minden Mines Team(this was during the period when he was mining coal)and the big game of the season was soon to be played against a neighboring team.

The Minden team had heard of a curve ball pitcher, the first one they ever knew about. They hired him, with instructions to bring along a catcher familiar with the curve ball to do the catching.

The day came for the big game and the opposing team was so baffled by the curve ball, which none of them had ever seen thrown before, that father's team easily won the game. With the familiar gleam in his blue-gray eyes and with a smile, he intimated that the expense of getting the pitcher and catcher from "foreign fields" was well taken care of by supporters of the opposing team, implying that some might have lost something besides the game!

Father enjoyed hunting and was a fair shot. Miami, at the time, had a gun club, and during the summer months he did some trap shooting of clay pigeons. He once gave me a new Winchester pump gun for my birthday and said, "When you can beat me, I'll quit."

He followed this sport for awhile and sure enough one day he said, "Son, you're getting pretty good, so I'm going to quit and go back to my fishing. There is not enough exercise in trap shooting."

He was a real Fly Fisherman. He did most of his fishing by wading the small streams all over the area around Miami: Cowskin River; Honey Creek; Big Cabin; Clear Creek; Wolf and Lost Creeks. He could drive out to any of these and be fishing within a short time. He carried his fishing equipment in his car and also had a full camping outfit and a small tent, a food box and an icebox attached to the running board of his car. If he decided to go farther away and spend the night, about all he would have to get would be a chunk of ice, a loaf of bread, and some bacon. He usually carried canned foods at all times in the food box.

Many times I would go along with him. We would leave the office around four o'clock, drive to some private spot and he would start fishing. I would make camp and have a fire made and ready to get supper when he came in. If fishing were good he would not get back before dark. We spent many summer nights sleeping under the stars. We usually were up by daybreak; sometimes we would cook breakfast, other times go back to town and have breakfast, shave, clean up and be at the office by eight o'clock.

Early in 1920, a Golf Club was organized and a nine-hole course laid out. He thought the exercise would be good for him but after playing awhile he discovered it was a very difficult game to play well. If he could not play it well, he said, he would just stay with his fishing. He said he did not care to play second fiddle, even though it was just for fun.

I recall some of these things because they show that despite the strenous life he led, his motto was "Whatever the endeavor, if it was worth doing, it was worth doing well." After the artificial lakes and club-house were built and the lakes filled and stocked with fish, he did most of his fishing out there.

It was in October, 1928, we were having a meeting of mine superintendents in the office, when Father almost collapsed during some discussion and it was necessary to take him home. We had Dr. Mortensen, from the Battle Creek Sanitarium, to come to Miami and see him. The Doctor advised him to stay in bed for thirty days.

This was hard medicine for him to take. He turned his basement room at home into an office and would have some of us up to see him during the day. If he got tired he would lie down on a couch. After this, he seldom went to the downtown office.

During the early part of 1929, the plans for the new bank building were discussed and the fianl stages of the bank consolidation were completed in March, 1929. This was the last business transaction of any consequence that Father directed. From this time on his health gradually declined.

It was some time in the late summer that he wanted to go to Denver, Colorado, and see Mr. Al Coleman's doctors. After talking to his friend, Dr. Wormington, who said he did not think it would be harmful for him to go, but would probably be of no benefit in his opinion. However, if it would satisfy father it might be best for him to go.(It was the Doctor's opinion that he was not going to get well.)

He was in Denver under the care of two fine physicians, but he never showed any improvement and gradually grew worse. On November 20, 1929, he closed his mission on this earth and went on to that fair and promised land, which after all is said and done, is the place where we are promised that peaceful rest.

I truly believe when I go to see him and shake his hand he will greet me with that warm, sincere smile on his face, and say, "Son, this is a wonderful place. I'm so glad to see you!"

Naturally, being human, I wonder how much Father will know of what transpired after his leaving. The good Book says, "For now we see through a glass darkly; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known."

It was such a short time until the country settled down into a deep "Depression", and a ton of zinc concentrates sold for $13 per ton, much lower than it had ever been during his career in the Tri-State District. I have often wondered what his reaction would have been.

There is one thing I believe should be recorded here before the books are closed. The Company never lost a lawsuit except the one damage case against the Turkey Fat Mining Company, which was mentioned earlier in this narrative; that case brought prompt action to see that it never happened the same way, again.

In studying the records of the many law suits filed against the Company, which in total involved several millions of dollars, this to my mind was a remarkable record. Especially is this true, when some very able lawyers over the country contended that the Titles of the Quapaw Indian country were very dubious and advised clients not to invest money on such titles. Some might question the above statement. There were many compensation claims filed but these were settled before the Industrial Commission.

Nothing, since early in the beginning of this brief history of the life of my father, has been said covering the activities of the other Trustees of the Commerce Company: Mr. C. M. Harvey and Mr. George L. Coleman. This has been written to give briefly the activities of my father in order that my children and their children will have a better understanding of the man whom they will be proud to call Grandfather.

It will be only a few more years until the great Tri-State Mining District and those who brought it into a reality, will be (from a mining standpoint) only a memory. Mr. Harvey and Mr. Coleman were fine cooperative partners and usually without any arguments or controversies followed the leadership of the man they selected to head the organization founded back in 1907.

I think in closing it would only be natural for me to say, "This man was a great and noble character." However, I am going to quote a few letters and excerpts from the many letters and messages received at the time of his leaving. This, I think, will express what others thought of him as a man. They came from a cross-section of people from all walks of life and from many states of the nation, a perspective which I believe no one can but truthfully say, as the message from David O. Hoag of Washington, D. C. expressed it:

"A great man of Israel has fallen."

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"Big Men with large business affairs have helped us with their time, their money and their influence. We feel that special mention should be made of J. F. Robinson of Miami, who has given weeks to this Movement. It is utterly impossible to estimate the value of his influence and service to the Campaign. He has gone about in his quiet, unassuming way, always with the most optimistic spirit and ready to lend encouragement, not only to the Movement, but to the Director of the Movement."----BAPTIST GENERAL CONVENTION OF OKLAHOMA ANNUAL. 1926. P. 84.

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"A trusted and true friend."
---J. O. Kuyrkendall, President, D. O. K.
Land & Cattle Company, Atoka, Oklahoma.

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"Not only his family but also every citizen of this District will miss his smile and clasp of true friendship."
---Don H. Elleman, Lawyer, Columbus, Kansas.

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"I have lost one of my best friends."
---W. A. Rhea, Umatilla, Florida.

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"I am deeply grieved. We was a fine type of rugged honesty and possessed the courage, vision and imagination to found, operate and build what became a great mining enterprise."
---C. F. Kelly, President, The Anaconda Copper Company. 25 Broadway, New York City.

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"He was one of God's best men."
---L. R. Scarborough, President, Baptist State Convention of Texas

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"The District has lost a leader and I, a true fr friend."
---A. E. Bendelari, President, Eagle-Picher Lead Company, Cincinnati.

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"Your Father, Our Friend."
---J. I. Cromwell, Independent Oil and Gas Producer, Roswell, New Mexico.

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"The State of Oklahoma has lost one of its most valuable and useful citizens. His achievements and wonderful life should be a constant inspiration to you and his thousands of friends throughout the State."
---W. J. Holloway, Governor of Oklahoma.
State Capitol Building, Oklahoma City.

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" Great Man. A great loss."
---Howard I. Young, President, American Zinc, Lead & Smelting Co., St. Louis, Missouri.

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"The community has lost a splendid influence for better living. He will live on in those whose lives he has influenced."
---Will H. Coghill, United States Department of Commerce, Rolla, Missouri.

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"A man like your Father cannot pass without his entire community feeling the blow and while the personal loss of family is greatest, all his former associates and friends will week by week miss his calm, good counsel and his great constructive influence in a District where such a leader is needed."

---Norman P. Rood, P. O. Box 734, Wilmington, Delaware.

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"He had my highest regard and respect. All who knew him and his accomplishments will recognize that the industry has lost a man of great constructive value to it."

---A. G. McKenzie, Kerns Building, Salt Lake City, Utah.

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"I do not believe that I have ever witnessed a more sincere tribute to a man's memory than that which was accorded to our late friend."

---Harry Sharp, Secretary, Associated Industries of Kansas, Topeka.

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"The loss of your Father will be deeply felt by the entire Zinc producing Industry and he has been a consistent and progressive leader in this work. He will be greatly missed by the local communities in which he had spent so many years, and which owe so much of their present prosperity to his efforts."

---Russell B. Caples, Great Falls, Montana.

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"He was a friend and outstanding citizen."

---John P. Hefferman, Ouitremont, Quebec, Canada

"The Tri-State Field has lost its greatest friend. Everyone who knew him will mourn his loss".
---L. E. Wicher, 25 Broad Street, New York, N.Y.

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"He was one of the outstanding men of Oklahoma. I think I never knew a more unselfish man. I greatly prized his personal friendship and deeply regret his passing. His loss will be felt greatly by the people of Ottawa County and the entire State. He was a man of very highest character and I entertained a deep, personal affection for him."
---W. W. Hastings, Congressman, Second District of Oklahoma, Muskogee.

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"James F. Robinson was one of Oklahoma's best -- quiet but aggressive. It is with sincere regret that these Oklahoma builders are passing away."
---C. N. Haskell, Oklahoma's First Governor.

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"I have always considered Mr. Robinson as one of the outstanding builders of the Southwest."
---George D. Key, Lawyer, Oil Exchange Building, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

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"He was my very best friend. He was more to me than a man; he was an institution. I will be at Miami to pay my respects to one of the best men I have ever known."
---Al F. Williams, Department of Justice, District of Kansas, Topeka.

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"He not only was a man in its truest sense, but a friend in its highest meaning."
---Russell Palmer, Carlton Hotel, London England.

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"He was a wonderful man and it always made me feel good to talk to him."
---Fred A. Yard, 120 Broadway, New York, N.Y.

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"I have always realized how much the development of the Picher Clinic was due to his interest, far-sighted vision, and courage."
---A. J. Lanza, M. D., Medical Director.
Metropolitan Life Insurance Company,
New York, N. Y.

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"There was no one with whom I came in contact during my service as Commissioner of Indian Affairs, for whom I had more respect or a higher regard than Mr. Robinson. He was an outstanding character in his community, progressive, constructive and successful business man. He was a consistent Christian; he was truly 'the Salt of the Earth'. It was indeed a privilege to have known him. His removal will be a severe loss not only to his immediate community but to the State of Oklahoma, and he will be missed in the Business World."
---Charles H. Burke, Former Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C.

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"A mighty man has fallen, one whom his friends knew as a kind and thoughtful neighbor, a tried and trusted counsellor and co-worker. You were so fortunate as to call him Father, and know that inward tenderness of love which comes only with personal family ties. He was universally loved and respected by those who knew him for those sterling qualities of character which set him apart from the great mass of humanity. He had the power and disposition to aid and assist in a very personal and material way many worthy causes. All over this part of the country are erected monuments to his memory. True, he had no thought of building monuments to himself when he extended his hand to help the poor, the unfortunate, the sick and uninstructed, but such in reality they are, and such they will remain until their foundations have crumbled into dust. Soon shall we pass from earth and its toiling only remembered by what we have done. Let us each emulate in some small way his worthy example."

---Lloyd B. Drake, Dean of Northeast Oklahoma Junior College, Miami

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"Your Father was a good man and I know what a loss the District has felt, especially the miners, whose friend he always was, as I know myself."

---Charles Dunn, Tucson, Arizona.
(A former employee)

* * *

"Your Father left you, his family and his friends, a wonderful heritage. I do not mean of material things. He left a good name--which is better than great riches. He left to his community an impress for good; and for his children an example of nobility. That is, and will continue to be, a source of great comfort always to all of you."

---Charles T. Orr, Joplin, Misspuri.

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"He was such a stalwart leader, so public-spirited in his attitude, so kindly in his contacts and so fixed in his principles of right and wrong, that besides the great loss to you and his family, the community and the American Mining Congress have lost a valued friend and consistent supporter in every effort looking to better conditions in The Mining Industry."

---J. F. Gallbreath, Secretary, American Mining Congress, Washington, D. C.

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"The work he did and the life he lived will be remembered forever, by those who knew him."

---Former Congressman, E. B. Howard, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

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"Your Father was a good and noble man that was loved for his generosity and fair dealing with his fellow man."

---Tom J. Dooley, a former employee of the Commerce Company, El Paso, Texas.

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"One of God's noble men; his advice and counsel was valued by many."

---James M. Wood, President, Stephens College, Columbia, Missouri.

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"I had known your Father for many years and counted him among my staunchest friends."

---Elmer Thomas, United States Senate Washington, D. C.

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"I thank God for his noble life and for his devotion to Christ's cause."
---E. C. Routh, Houston, Texas.

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"No doubt you have long since developed a philosophy of living that enables you to weather through a shock even so severe and depressing as the loss of a dearly beloved father. A loss so personal cannot be shared; that is why I think one feels so helpless in circumstances such as these in helping a friend.

"Your father was a remarkable personality. The impression which he made on his community, industry in which he was such an important figure, and his friends, will be felt for many a year. The main attributes of his character seem to me were honest, justness and fearlessness. I have never known a man more loyal to the interests of his friends, to his business associates and to his community--no one having stronger regard for just dealings and no one more fearless in pursuit of an action or policy which he deemed right. Such a man commands strong friendships and universal respect.

"My acquaintance with your father extended over a period of ten years. We were brought together on matters pertaining to business and although my contacts with him were never of a purely social character, I never-the-less had plenty of opportunity to measure his height, depth and breadth as an individual--a human being--and in time I came to have a very deep regard for him, and I am pleased to think that he regarded me in much the same light that I regarded him. At any rate he called me 'Friend' and now that I shall see him no more I have begun to realize that I, too, have sustained a very great personal loss.

"There is no one to take his place in the community he loved so well."
---R. C. Allen, Oglby-Norton & Company

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The following was published in the Miami News-Record as an editorial on November 22, 1929. Written by A. Scott Thompson, Attorney for the Commerce Company, who had been with Father "all the way" from the days of the Miami Royalty Company; from the inception and forming of the Commerce Mining and Royalty Company; until the final chapter was closed on November 20, 1929.

"JAMES F. ROBINSON, CITIZEN OF MIAMI AND COMMUNITY BUILDER IS GONE.

To us, his fellow townsmen, who knew him longest and loved him best, has fallen the sad and solemn duty of paying our last tribute of affection and devotion.

Here, where he worked and lived, all that was mortal of this man we knew so well, is returned for a farewell. This is as he would have had it, for he loved this City of Miami and the district surrounding. He loved these people and truly he did in fact give his life for the betterment of mankind and the upbuilding of the community in which he lived.

Mr. Robinson, in a business way, made a great success. We have seen his material wealth grow from nothing to a considerable value. But to one who was near him and understood his aims, ideals and motives, it is known the wealth, as such, held no attraction for him. The accumulation of wealth to him meant opportunity to build, construct and improve his home town, his county and state, and better conditions for his fellow man.

For years he has been a victim of a serious physical ailment that would have discouraged and slowed down a less strong man but he, with full knowledge that his span of years was being shortened with his labors, by his indomitable will fought on, that his ideals and aims might be further advanced.

The man whose memory we all honor today was truly great. No college or university bestowed upon him its scholastic degrees, but in that great school of life he studied long, he studied hard and he learned the lessons well. We honor not only our friend who has gone, we honor not only his loved ones, but we honor ourselves, our city, state and great mining district when we bow our heads in deep sorrow for the passing on of one who had faith in, loved, and served humanity.

Mr. Robinson was a great leader, a constructive worker and in all matters coming before him, whether involved in church, civic or business problems, he at all times sought the straight and narrow way and when convinced of the true course nothing could induce him to waver. He was stern in his determination to do right as he saw the way.

I have known him well. I have seen him under many and varying conditions and want to here say that I have never known him to do a man a conscious wrong. No man could work for him as long as I have without realizing the high ideals that moved him and thanking God for such a friend.

A great and good man has been among us. He has left his imprint on our lives and we are thankful that he came this way.

---A. Scott Thompson.

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